Teacher development for religious and cultural diversity in citizenship education: a community of practice approach

By

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DECLARATION

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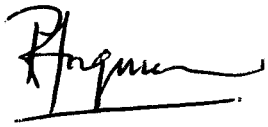
Signature: 

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Abstract

This research focuses on teacher-learning for religious and cultural diversity. The background to the study is associated with curriculum reforms in South Africa since democratization in 1994 and the growing interest globally in the integration of Citizenship education and Religion education. In South Africa, the new national curricula after 1994 introduced Life Orientation as a learning area / subject which includes Citizenship education with Religion education as key focus areas. The outcomes associated with these focus areas require school-based learners to demonstrate knowledge of diversity, co-operative and communicative forms of democracy and commitment to the values espoused in The Constitution. The question that arises in relation to the professional development of teachers in this regard, concerns whether teachers have the professional knowledge base to ensure that their learners acquire the knowledge and skills to enable them to participate as competent citizens in a pluralist democracy. Consequently the large-scale transmissionist approaches to teacher development that have dominated INSET programmes have been critiqued in this study for being inadequate for learning the complexities associated with diversity, citizenship and democracy. This study has hence advocated for teacher-learning through participation in communities of practice which arguably provide appropriate learning conditions in which dialogue and critical reflection characterise the interaction between teachers. On the grounds that South Africa's social-political history enforced the segregation of racial groups and privileged Christianity above other religions or beliefs, a further argument is related to how this history has influenced teachers' frames of reference and whether teachers' frames of reference continue to influence how Citizenship education is approached in the classroom. Hence, the theoretical framework for this study has been formulated to address the issue of teacher-learning for Citizenship education and Religion education (Citizenship education/Religion education) and the extent to which the frames of reference of teachers influence their approaches to democracy, values, citizenship and diversity. To this end two learning theory perspectives have been explored, viz. Mezirow's transformative learning theory (1991, 2000) and communities of practice, as conceptualised by Wenger (1998, 2006b). The efficacy of the communities of practice concept for teacher-learning for diversity was investigated against a transformative learning theory background, using a mixed methods approach. A cross-sectional survey was conducted amongst 60 secondary schools in the Gauteng province, followed by a phase of participatory action research (PAR) with three teachers over a period of approximately eight months. The survey questionnaire was designed to determine the perspectives of a sample of Life Orientation teachers towards learning and teaching religious and cultural diversity in Life Orientation. The findings were used to inform the action research process which in turn drew attention to the significance of the community of practice concept for assisting teachers to generate content knowledge for Citizenship education/Religion education from an inclusive and constructivist perspective. The findings of the survey questionnaire indicated that the majority of the teachers in the sample were not opposed to including religious diversity in their Life Orientation classes despite not having backgrounds in Religious Studies or meaningful in-service training. The PAR findings indicate the value of engagement by teachers in a community of practice for creating and acquiring appropriate content knowledge and for critical reflection on the meaning and application of democratic and personal values for Citizenship education/Religion education.

Opsomming

Hierdie navorsingsprojek fokus op onderwyser-leer ter bevordering van religieuse en kulturele diversiteit. Die agtergrond van hierdie studie is enersyds kurrikulumhervorming in Suid-Afrika sedert demokratisering in 1994 en andersyds die groeiende, wêreldwye belangstelling in die integrasie van Burgerskapopvoeding (*Citizenship Education*) en Religieuse-onderrig (*Religion Education*). Lewensoriëntering as ‘n leerarea/vak wat Burgerskapopvoeding en Religieuse-onderrig as primêre fokus insluit, is na 1994 as deel van die nuwe nasionale kurrikulum in Suid-Afrika bekendgestel. Die leeruitkomste van hierdie fokus vereis dat leerders kennis moet demonstreer rakende: diversiteit, samewerkende- en kommunikatiewe vorms van demokrasie en die verbintenis tot die waardes soos in die Grondwet vervat. Die vraag word gestel of die professionele ontwikkeling van onderwysers die nodige professionele kennisbasis bied wat kan verseker dat leerders wel kennis en vaardighede verwerf wat hulle in staat sal stel om bevoegde burgers te wees om aan ‘n pluralistiese demokrasie deel te neem. In hierdie studie word die transmissionistiese benaderings (*transmissionist approaches*) wat die indiensonderwysersopleiding (*INSET*) gedomineer het, krities ondersoek en bevraagteken ook hierdie benadering vir die onderrig-leer van kompleksiteite soos diversiteit, burgerskap en demokrasie. In hierdie studie word onderwyser-leer by wyse van deelname aan “*gemeenskappe van praktyk*” (*communities of practice*) onderskryf hoofsaaklik weens die moontlikhede wat hierdie benadering bied om gepaste leeromstandighede te skep waar onderwysers se interaksie deur dialoog en kritiese refleksie en terugskouing gekenmerk word. In die lig van Suid-Afrika se sosio-politiese geskiedenis waartydens die segregasie van rassegroepe afgedwing is en Christendom bo ander religieë of geloofsoortuigings bevoorreg was, word kritiese argumente gevoer rondom die invloed van hierdie geskiedenis op onderwysers se verwysingsraamwerke en hoe hierdie betrokke verwysingsraamwerke onderwysers se benadering tot Burgerskapopvoeding beïnvloed het. In die teoretiese raamwerk van hierdie studie word die grondliggende kwessies en diskoerse van onderwyser-leer vir Burgerskapopvoeding en Religieuse-onderrig (Burgerskapopvoeding/ Religieuse-onderrig) ondersoek asook die mate waarop die verwysingsraamwerke van onderwysers hulle onderrigbenaderinge tot demokrasie, waardes, burgerskap en diversiteit beïnvloed het. Die twee leerteorieë en perspektiewe van Mezirow se *Transformatiewe Leerteorie* (1991, 2000) en “*gemeenskappe van praktyk*”, soos deur Wenger (1998, 2006b) gekonseptualiseer is, word as vertrekpunte geneem. Die effektiwiteit van die konsep “*gemeenskappe van praktyk*” vir onderwys-leer in belang van diversiteit, word ondersoek teen die agtergrond van ‘n transformatiewe leerteorie deur gebruik te maak van ‘n gemengde-metodes-benadering (*mixed methods approach*). ‘n Deursnee-opname is aan 60 sekondêre skole in die Gauteng provinsie gedoen, gevolg deur ‘n fase van Deelnemende-Aksienavorsing met drie onderwysers oor ‘n tydperk van ongeveer agt maande. Die vraelys vir die opname is sodanig ontwerp dat ‘n steekproef Lewensoriënteringonderwysers se perspektiewe van onderrig-leer van religieuse en kulturele diversiteit in Lewensoriëntering bepaal kon word. Hierdie bevindinge is vir die aksienavorsingsfase gebruik wat die aandag gefokus het op die belangrikheid van “*gemeenskappe van praktyk*” as ‘n konsep wat onderwysers kan help om inhoudskennis vir Burgerskapopvoeding/Religieuse-onderrig vanuit ‘n inklusiewe en konstruktiewe benadering te genereer. Die bevindinge van die vraelysopname toon dat die meerderheid van die onderwysers, wat deel was van die steekproef, nie gekant is teen die insluiting van religieuse diversiteit in Lewensoriënteringsklasse nie ten spyte van die feit dat hulle geen agtergrond in Religieuse-onderrig of enige ander betekenisvolle indiensopleiding ontvang het nie. Die bevindings van die Deelnemende–Aksienavorsingsproses bewys die waarde van onderwyserbetrokkenheid in “*gemeenskappe van praktyk*” om inhoudskennis te verwerf en krities na te dink oor die betekenis en toepassings van demokratiese en persoonlike waardes vir Burgerskapopvoeding/Religieuse-onderrig.

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I dedicate this work to my loving parents,

my mother, Jean Le Roux (1928 -)

and my father, Eugene Le Roux (9th June 1926 – 12th June 2009).

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Affirming diversity is a value integral to the notion of a pluralist society. In 2001 Abdelfattah Amor, the United Nations special rapporteur (2001: 2) wrote the following on the role of Religious education in the pursuit of tolerance and non-discrimination:

> Religious education should be conceived as a tool to transmit knowledge and values pertaining to all religious trends, in an inclusive way, so that individuals realise their being part of the same community and learn to create their own identity in harmony with identities different from their own.

Whilst this is a noble and well-meaning statement, the outcomes of Religious education alluded to in Amor's statement are unlikely to be realised without teachers sharing a vision of diversity "as a human hallmark" (Sears 1999: 5).

This study therefore focuses on teacher professional development for effective practice for religious and cultural diversity in a pluralist democracy. The study explores Wenger's (1998, 2006a, 2006b; Wenger, McDermott & Snyder 2002; *cf.* Lave & Wenger 1991, 1999, 2002) communities of practice theory as a locus for teacher-learning about diversity in a knowledge field, which shall be referred to as Citizenship education/Religion education in this dissertation (*cf.* DoE 2003a).

This chapter is an orientation to the study and comprises the following:

- An overview of the social, political and broader intellectual context and background to the study;
- The demarcation of the problem as this pertains to teacher development initiatives for effective practice in Citizenship education/Religion education;
- The aims of the study, followed by the research questions;
- Delimitation of the study;
- An overview of the theoretical framework;
- The conceptual framework;
- An overview of the research design, research process and methods of data collection;
- An overview of the research framework.

1.2 CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The background to this study is provided by two contexts, one being the social and political paradigm shift in South Africa since the first democratic elections in 1994, the other being the growing awareness globally of the relationship between studying religious diversity and democratic Citizenship education (Arthur, Gearon & Sears 2010; Weisse 2007: 9; Jackson 2007: 27).

In South Africa, numerous policies were developed after 1994 by the National Department of Education to deracialise the education system and to promote democratic values and fundamental human rights (Chisholm 2005: 193; Carrim & Enslin 2002: 19; Jansen 1999a: 57; DoE 2002, 2003a, 2003c). Desegregation in South Africa resulted in schools becoming not only ethnically diverse, but also diverse in terms of the religions, cultures and worldviews of teachers and learners. It is a constitutional[1] and policy requirement in South Africa to embrace learner diversity in terms of race, culture, ethnicity, religion, belief, language, gender, ability and sexual orientation in the school ethos as a whole. The implication therefore is that diversity is also a key concept to be acknowledged and explored at curriculum level. This is the case in the learning area/subject Life Orientation, where diversity is referred to explicitly in the Citizenship education focus area in the National Curriculum Statement FET (Grades 10-12) (DoE 2003a: 11)[2] (hereafter NCS FET).

Life Orientation was introduced as a compulsory learning area/subject for all learners in Grades R-9 in the new national curricula after 1994 (DoE 2002; DoE 2003a). The essential purpose of Life Orientation in the curriculum is to guide and prepare learners for successful living and to enable them to cope with the problems and possibilities of life (DoE 2003a; Van Deventer & Van Niekerk 2008: 6). Central to Life Orientation is the "study of self in relation to others and society" (DoE 2003a: 9).

The NCS FET (DoE 2003a), was introduced to Grade 10 learners for the first time in 2006. Life Orientation in the FET band is designed around four focus areas, viz. Personal well-being, Citizenship education, Physical education and Careers and career choices (DoE 2003a: 10; *cf.* Van Deventer & Van Niekerk 2008). Of the four learning outcomes that give Life Orientation its scope in the NCS (FET), Citizenship education is concerned with the social development of young people within a framework of values and constitutional rights "in order to practise responsible citizenship and to enhance social justice and environmentally sustainable living" (DoE 2003a: 13).

[1] *Cf. The Constitution of South Africa* (Chapter 2, (9), (15)).

[2] At the time of writing this dissertation (2010), a proposal to amend the RNCS was up for consideration. It has been mooted that Life Orientation be removed as a Learning Area from the Foundation and Intermediate Phases and replaced with *Life Skills*. *Religion Studies* is specifically included as a subject under Life Skills (DoE 2010: 4). In the amended FET curriculum, it is recommended that Citizenship education be replaced with the "topic", "Democracy and human rights" (DoE 2010).

In addition, learners are to be "exposed to diverse religions in order to foster peaceful co-existence in a multi-religious society" (DoE 2003a: 13) (*cf.* Amor 2001: 2).

Hence, the way in which religion is referred to in the Life Orientation learning area/subject reflects the State's shift in position towards religion since 1994. In contrast to the Christian Nationalism of the previous regime, the new government in South Africa adopted a position towards religion in education, based not on the religious interests of any particular group, but in accordance with the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (1996, 15 (1)) (hereafter the *Constitution)* which advocates the right to freedom of conscience, thought, religion, belief or opinion among its citizens (Chidester 2002a: 91, 2003a, 2006; *cf.* Prinsloo 2008).

The shift in the State's position with regard to religion or belief was consequently emulated in the new national curriculum statements (DoE 2002, 2003a) introduced after 1994. Learning about diverse religions is an innovative curriculum reform that stands in stark contrast to the privileging of Christianity characteristic of the previous regime (Chidester 2006: 62; Summers 1996: 1; *cf.* Rose & Tunmer 1975: 82; Jarvis 2008)[3], but consistent with models of non-confessional religious education in the United Kingdom (Jackson 1997, 2004a, 2009; Grimmitt 1994, 2008; Hull n.d.) and various northern and western European states (Weisse 2003; Jackson (ed.) 2007). This new subject is referred to as 'Religion education' (1.8.4) in the RNCS (DoE 2002) and the NCS FET (DoE 2003a) and is given greater scope and clarity in the *National Policy on Religion and Education* (DoE 2003b; Chidester 2002a, 2003a, 2006; Prinsloo 2008). The shift in the State's position on religion and the resultant shift in the NCS FET meant that teachers and learners would study religion as a sphere of human activity, thought and action that calls for a shift in mindset away from the idea that studying religion has a proselytising function only. Such a shift in mindset includes developing a sense of the role Religion education ought to play in understanding diversity and thus in promoting the values of toleration[4], mutuality and peaceful co-existence (Batelaan cited in Kodelja & Bassler 2004: 10; Weisse 2007: 9). Values such as these are the aspirations of a modern, secular, pluralist democracy and the values that learners ought to demonstrate in line with the Citizenship education focus area in Life Orientation (DoE 2002; 2003a; Chidester 2002a).

This study therefore serves to contribute to the growing body of research conducted in South Africa, the United Kingdom, and various other states in northern, western and eastern Europe on the contribution that Religion education makes to Citizenship education, to intercultural understanding, to human rights education and to promoting peaceful co-existence in multicultural societies (Jackson 2003: 3; 2004a, 2007; Gearon 2004; Weisse 2007; Miedema & Bertram-Troost 2008; Van der Want *et al* 2009). More specifically, this study contributes towards research on

[3] For a more detailed account of Religious education and CNE *cf.* Malherbe 1977; Summers 1996; Chidester 2006; Jarvis 2008.
[4] For a detailed explanation of tolerance / toleration, see Conceptual Framework (1.9.3 (iv)).

teacher development for democratic Citizenship education, diversity and social justice in professional learning communities (Westheimer 2008; Cochran-Smith 2004; *cf.* Kerr 2002, 2003). In addition, the study contributes towards how teachers' frames of reference may influence their approaches to Religion education and their professional development for Citizenship education (Bakker & Heimbrock 2007; *cf.* Roux 1998; Ter Avest & Bakker 2009: 13ff; Du Preez 2008; *cf.* Mezirow 1991, 2000).

1.3 DEMARCATION OF THE PROBLEM

As noted by Weisse (2009a: 8) in relation to a REDCO[5] project on teachers' responses to diversity, teachers have a central role to play in meeting the demands of learning and teaching in a pluralist context. In the light of this statement by Weisse, a significant problem associated with the implementation of Life Orientation in schools in South Africa centres on the fact that teachers have not been adequately trained to do so (*cf.* Christiaans 2006: 1). The training of teachers for Life Orientation has consisted of one- to three-day courses (Prinsloo 2007: 164), or in some cases five-day courses (Rooth 2005: 236), in which all four of the outcomes were covered. The emphasis in in-service teacher programmes (hereafter INSET) seems to have been on the structure and outcomes of the Life Orientation learning area/subject (Prinsloo 2007: 164; Van Deventer & Van Niekerk 2008: 4ff; Christiaans 2006: 5) or on specific areas, such as HIV and AIDS, and not on the content that underpins the various focus areas of Life Orientation. As Van Deventer and Van Niekerk (2008: 4) observed, the problem of teacher competence lies with teachers being required to teach all of the aspects of Life Orientation when they are specialists in one or other of the previous constituents of Life Orientation (*cf.* Rooth 2005), viz. Guidance, or Physical Education, or Religious education. More seriously, teaching Life Orientation may be seen to be a "transitory duty taken up by different teachers from year to year" (Van Deventer & Van Niekerk 2008: 5) when schools do not have the teachers professionally trained to teach Life Orientation.

The problem of not having an adequately trained cohort of Life Orientation teachers is emphasised by Rooth's (2005: 239) assertion that Life Orientation is based on a range of underlying theoretical constructs and specific content knowledge, which contribute to Life Orientation's being a highly specialised learning area/subject requiring specifically trained educators (2.2.3). Shulman's (1999: 63, 64) position on what constitutes the "professionalisation of teaching" elaborates the problem surrounding the successful implementation of Life Orientation in the school curriculum. According to Shulman (1999: 64) the "professionalisation of teaching" is associated with teachers acquiring a knowledge base comprising (*inter alia*) scholarship in content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of educational contexts and knowledge of learners and their characteristics

[5] REDCo is the acronym for an international research project: **R**eligion in **E**ducation. A contribution to **D**ialogue or a factor of **Co**nflict in transforming societies of European countries (Weisse 2007: 10).

(*cf.* Grossman, Schoenfeld & Lee 2005: 201; Nieto 2006: 258). In relation to content knowledge, Shulman (1999: 65) emphasises that teachers have special responsibilities towards teaching and learning in that they must have a depth of understanding with respect to particular subjects as well as a "broad liberal education that serves as a framework for old learning and as a facilitator for new understanding" (ibid: 65). Shulman points out that in the face of student diversity, "the teacher must have a flexible and multifaceted comprehension" (ibid: 65) in order to impart or facilitate different or alternative explanations of concepts or principles. Moreover, a teacher's attitudes and values will influence how the subject matter is imparted to learners as well as his or her willingness to engage in good scholarship or inquiry (ibid: 65; *cf.* Banks, Cochran-Smith *et al* 2005: 243).

The views of Shulman (1999), and others (*cf.* Nieto 2006, 2000; Banks *et al* 2005; Gay 2002) regarding the teacher's knowledge base and ability to perform skillfully in relation to subject matter become even more relevant if one narrows the Life Orientation learning area/subject down to its particular focus areas (e.g. Citizenship education, Physical education and Personal development). With specific reference to Citizenship education, which includes Religion education, the RNCS (DoE 2002), the NCS FET (DoE 2003a) and the *National Policy on Religion and Education* (DoE 2003b) provide a complex picture of the ideal learner who will emerge after twelve years of schooling, knowing and understanding democratic processes as responsible citizens, and sufficiently knowledgeable about religious diversity to "foster peaceful co-existence in a multi-religious society" (DoE 2003a: 13; *cf.* 2.2.3). A key question that dominates this study is related to how well, if at all, teachers have been prepared to assist learners to achieve the knowledge and understanding assumed in the Citizenship education focus area. The complex nature of the knowledge base associated with Citizenship education in the NCS and the pedagogical skills that teachers should be able to demonstrate are illustrated in this synopsis of knowledge and implied skills derived from the relevant curriculum documents:

- Diversity as a concept (DoE 2003a: 11, 25): diversity and democratic Citizenship education; the ability to reflect on democratic procedures and dispositions (DoE 2003a: 11).
- Religion education as an aspect of democratic Citizenship education, religion, religions and religious diversity (DoE 2003b: 9).
- Major religions, ethical traditions and indigenous belief systems in South Africa, and how knowledge of these contributes towards a harmonious society (DoE 2003a: 25; 2003b: 15).
- Teaching and learning about religions in an open, pluralist, democratic society (DoE 2003a: 12, 13; 2003b: 7).
- The purpose of Religion education in relation to human rights education and education for peace (DoE 2001; 2003a: 13).

- Promoting the values of a democratic society (DoE 2001, 2003a, 2003b).
- The meaning of religious literacy and the facilitation skills to combat religious "illiteracy" (DoE 2003b: 16), religious intolerance, stereotyping and prejudice.

In addition to a complex knowledge base, the professional competence of teachers for Citizenship education includes their being able to create an environment in which their learners develop the skills of debate, dialogue and deliberation, as well as a positive disposition towards infusing a culture of human rights, social justice and recognition of diversity in the classroom (Carrim & Keet 2005: 99ff; Jackson 2004a: 27; Shulman 1999: 64, 65). Since Life Orientation was first introduced as a new learning area/subject (Chisholm 2005: 193), Van Deventer and Van Niekerk (2008: 5) contend that teachers do not have any experience to draw on. Moreover with regard to Citizenship education specifically, South Africans, as Enslin (2003: 74) has argued, do not as yet have a settled concept of Citizenship education to draw on either. The concept of citizenship reflected in various policy documents since 1994 stands in stark contrast to the indoctrinating influences of Religious Instruction and the Youth Preparedness programmes introduced in 1972 into white schools in South Africa (Christie 1991: 180). Youth Preparedness, with Moral Education, was a vehicle for Christian National Education and hence also for promoting apartheid ideology (ibid: 182). Acceptance of diversity in South African society continues to be hampered by the lingering effects of racial discrimination (Hemson 2006), religious conservatism (Rooth 2005: 262; Chidester 2006: 70; Roux 2007b: 104) and xenophobia[6]. Teaching and learning about diverse religions and beliefs also remains a contentious issue in many schools in South Africa (*cf.* Rooth 2005: 262).

Yet the findings of various research projects on the status and practice of Life Orientation in schools (Rooth 2005; Christiaans 2006; Prinsloo 2007; Van Deventer & Van Niekerk 2008) indicate that INSET programmes for teachers have been limited to short courses, and tend to be fragmented. Moreover, courses are run by education department-appointed trainers or facilitators whose knowledge of the subject matter has not enabled teachers to gain the depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding demanded in the various curriculum and policy documents (*cf.* the synopsis above) (Shulman 1999: 65; *cf.* Van Deventer & Van Niekerk 2008; Prinsloo 2007: 164). INSET programmes in the Gauteng and Limpopo provinces held between July 2005 and July 2007 to prepare educators for the implementation of Life Orientation in the FET provided only superficial coverage of Citizenship education and little or no reference to Religion education (*cf.* Orsmond & Gildenhuys 2005). Consequently no attention was paid to teachers acquiring the knowledge and skills that would enable effective intercultural and inter-religious learning and teaching bringing them in line with curriculum developments in South Africa and other pluralist democracies (*cf.* Jackson, Miedema, Weisse & Willaime (eds.) 2007).

[6] Antieviction.org.za, retrieved 6 September 2009; www.sagoodnews.co.za, retrieved 6 September 2009.

An assumption that has motivated this study is that the curriculum for Life Orientation was constructed within a liberal, democratic, multicultural philosophical framework. The curriculum writers have clearly adopted a particular stance on democracy, inclusivity, diversity, human rights and values consistent with promoting social justice in a constitutional democracy (*cf.* DoE 2003a: 2, 11, 13). Moreover, teachers are envisaged in the NCS FET as being the "key contributors to transformation of education in South Africa" (DoE 2003a: 5) and who are responsible for promoting human rights, inclusivity and social justice in schools (ibid: 4) (*cf*. Weisse 2009a: 8; Ter Avest & Bakker 2009: 13ff). It can be argued, therefore, that since teachers have a significant role to play in social transformation, it is imperative that INSET programmes become more than once-off, fragmented and decontextualised training sessions which disregard the cultural and/or religious identity of teachers and learners, the biographies of teachers and their frames of reference relative to their social and political contexts (*cf.* Van der Want (ed.) 2009; Nieto 2006: 457).

In addition, teacher-learning programmes should be designed to develop the professional knowledge base required for Citizenship education as well as provide the conditions for teachers to cultivate the capacity for critical reflection (Chapter 3.2.3.4 (ii)) on democratic culture (Westheimer 2008: 766; Gutmann 1987: 49; *cf.* Ter Avest 2007). If school-based learners are to learn to be "politically literate" (DoE 2003a: 11), then it follows that their teachers should be politically literate too, know how to manage difference and conflict and how to participate in democratic processes (Westheimer 2008: 756, 774).

To this end I contend that teacher development initiatives ought to be continuous, designed as opportunities for shared *learning* and personal engagement in professional learning communities, or, as will be argued in this study, communities of practice (Wenger 1998, 2006b; Wenger *et al* 2002).

1.4 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The aims of the study have been formulated against the context and background outlined in the previous sections. They are:

- To determine the extent of Life Orientation teachers' (Senior and FET phases) content knowledge of democratic Citizenship education and Religion education;
- To determine the extent of teacher competence to mediate[7] learning for diversity, particularly religious diversity, in the classroom context;
- To explore and apply the concept "community of practice" (Lave & Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998, 2006a, 2006b) to support teacher-learning for democratic Citizenship education and Religion education;

[7] The teacher's role as a mediator of learning places him/her between a body of knowledge and skills to be learned and the learner (Sadler 1998: 78) (*cf.* Ferguson 1999; Ferguson & Roux 2003b).

- To examine how social context influences the ways in which teachers construct knowledge and negotiate meaning for democratic Citizenship education in a community of practice (Wenger 1998: 51ff; Mezirow 1991: xvii, 11);
- To engage Life Orientation teachers in an action research process as reflective co-researchers to generate change in practice (Afdal 2007; Wadsworth 1998: 7).

This research was intended to be transformative (Creswell 2003: 11; *cf*. Reason & Bradbury 2006: xxv) as participants would be motivated to think critically about the processes of professional development in collaboration with colleagues in a community of practice (Cochran-Smith 2004: 13; Westheimer 2008: 757; *cf*. Sokol & Cranton 1998: 3).

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Against the background of the problem statement and the aims of the study, the central research question in this study was:

- How would participation by teachers in a community of practice contribute towards improving the teachers' knowledge base for effective practice for democratic Citizenship education in which Religion education is a key component?

The following sub-questions were derived from the main research question:

- To what extent do Life Orientation teachers conceive Religion education as being a vehicle for promoting the democratic values of inclusion, equality, tolerance, mutual respect, reciprocity and social justice?
- How effective is teacher participation in a community of practice for knowledge creation for diversity?
- How effective is a community of practice approach to teacher development for alerting teachers to local experiences of religion or belief and culture as resources for learning about diversity in the classroom?
- How effective is participatory action research as a strategy of inquiry for teacher professional development?

1.6 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study was confined to teacher development in only one aspect of the NCS FET, viz. Citizenship education, with special reference to diversity in Religion education. As noted previously in this chapter, various researchers have conducted empirical studies in the Life Orientation learning area/subject. Some studies have focused generally on the status of Life Orientation in schools, while others have focussed on the content of Life Orientation or have problematised teacher training for Life Orientation (Rooth 2005; Christiaans 2006). Others have focused more

specifically on teachers' perspectives on Life Orientation with a specific interest in Physical Education (Van Deventer & Van Niekerk 2008). The present study aimed to contribute to the literature on research in Life Orientation by investigating more closely the contributions that Religion education makes to Citizenship education, and therewith teacher competence for teaching and learning diversity (*cf.* Chidester 2002b; Baumfield 2003; Watson 2004; Gearon 2004, 2008; *cf.* Miedema & Bertram-Troost 2008; Hemson 2006; Du Preez 2008).

Moreover, the study was confined to Life Orientation teachers in the Gauteng province and to teachers of Life Orientation in the Senior Phase of the GET band (Grades 8-9) and the FET band (Grades 10-12). Originally, I intended to focus on Life Orientation in the FET band only, but this changed when it became obvious that many Life Orientation teachers are responsible for Life Orientation in both the FET band and the senior phase of the GET band.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To address the research questions, the theoretical framework for this study was guided by two kinds of learning theory: communities of practice theory (Wenger 1998, 2006b) and transformative adult learning theory (Mezirow 1991, 1994, 1997, 2000, 2009). Principles of deliberative democracy (Young 2000; Bohman 1996; Gutmann 1987, 1993) and critical multicultural education (Banks 1997, 2002; Nieto 2000; Cochran-Smith 2004) were also drawn upon to provide the democratic and inclusive frame for the communities of practice concept, the central focus of this study. The study sought to explore how communities of practice provide a context conducive to teachers gaining a sound conceptual understanding of religion, diversity of religions and beliefs and the relationship between Religion education and Citizenship education. Communities of practice potentially provide a locus for the enactment of the ideals and values of an inclusive, communicative concept of democracy (Young 2000: 22; Enslin, Pendlebury & Tjiattas 2001: 125) (1.9.2), a locus where teachers as learners should be able to address the contradictions and tensions associated with living and working together as citizens in a pluralist society.

Wenger (1998, Wenger *et al* 2002; *cf.* Lave & Wenger 1991, 2002) used the term "communities of practice" to refer to groups of people who join together and engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of interest (Wenger 1998: 73, 2006a: 1). The shared domain of interest is one of three dimensions that constitute a community of practice. The other two are mutual engagement and a shared repertoire. A detailed examination of these dimensions will be provided in Chapter 3 (3.4.4) as well as an evaluation of their significance for the professional development of the Life Orientation teacher for Citizenship education/Religion education (1.8.5).

Transformative learning theory as proposed by Mezirow (1991) and Mezirow and Associates (2000, 2009) provides an insight into how teachers, as adults and life-long learners, are likely to

approach learning for democratic citizenship and diversity (1.3). Mezirow (1991: 1) maintains that adult learners are “caught in their own histories” and in order to make sense of their experiences need to start with what has been acquired through prior learning or socialisation. The political changes in South Africa associated with the demise of apartheid required a shift in perspective from adults to accommodate knowing about, and participating in, the workings of a constitutional democracy. Hence understanding the frame of reference of the teacher and how it ostensibly influences his/her perceptions of diversity is integral to meeting the demands of an approach to Citizenship education that is inclusive, communicative (dialogical) and values-oriented (Gutmann 1996; Young 2000; Enslin *et al* 2001; Kerr 2002). The study was hence driven by the thesis that participation in a community of practice provides a context in which teachers are able to negotiate the complexities associated with learning and teaching about and for diversity through participation with others, and to assess and reassess their assumptions about democracy and diversity, reflectively and discursively (Mezirow 1991: 116, 117, 2000: 10).

The principles of critical multicultural education, the work of Nieto (2000) and Banks (1997, 2002, 2004; *cf.* Cochran-Smith 2004) in particular, have been drawn upon to add substance to the non-descript ways in which pluralism and diversity are addressed in communities of practice theory. Nieto (2000) and Banks (1997, 2002, 2004) define critical multicultural education as the kind of education that “challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism that students, their communities and teachers bring to school with them”. Thus, Nieto’s stance on multicultural education is that it is an approach that is important for all students, because “it is about all people, for all people, regardless of their ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, religion, gender, race or class” (Nieto 2000: 305, 2006: 458). Banks (1997: 127) emphasises moreover that teachers need to develop a “sophisticated understanding” of the diverse groups to which learners belong and to discover how cultures (including beliefs) may influence learning and lifestyles. Hence critical multicultural education demands that teachers and their learners think in more inclusive and expansive ways (Nieto 2000: 313). It is important to note that a multicultural perspective on Religion education does not simply operate on the principle of substituting one “truth” or perspective for another. Rather it reflects on multiple contradictory perspectives to understand reality more fully (Nieto 2000: 317; *cf.* Barnes 2009: 42). For Nieto (2000: 314), multicultural education invites teachers and their learners to put their learning into action for social justice, and prepares students for active membership in a democracy.

The theoretical framework outlined in this section forms the basis of the epistemological underpinning of this study. In the *Conceptual framework*, various terms and concepts derived from the theoretical frame are defined and discussed in more depth.

1.8 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

The following terms and concepts are used in this report. A distinction is made between *terms* that are used in the NCS and other support documents and those *concepts* that are derived from the theoretical perspectives (1.7) that contribute to the conceptual framework of this study.

1.8.1 Teacher professional development, teacher development, teacher education

The term 'teacher professional development' is clarified for the purposes of delimiting the scope of this study, given the many different interpretations of the term in the literature. Researchers in the field of teacher professional development seem to differentiate between 'teacher education' (pre-service) and 'teacher development' (in-service) (Evans 2002; Cochran-Smith 2004). At times however, as Southwood (2000: 19) has pointed out, the terms 'teacher professional development' and 'teacher education' are used synonymously, but at other times they are also used to differentiate between in-service teacher programmes for continuous, post-university development and pre-service or initial teacher education respectively. For conceptual clarity, the term 'teacher education' is used to refer to the initial or pre-service preparation of teachers. The term 'teacher development' is used interchangeably with 'teacher professional development' to refer to the ongoing personal, social and intellectual growth of teachers in those elements that constitute the knowledge, skills and procedures that teachers use in the day-to-day activities of their work (Hoyle cited in Evans 2002: 130).

Further explanation of the meaning of 'development' in adult learning theory will be included in Chapter 3 (3.2) in relation to Mezirow's transformative adult learning theory.

1.8.2 Life Orientation

Life Orientation is listed as one of seven core subjects required for accreditation in the FET band (DoE 2003a) (*cf.* 1.2; 1.3). Life Orientation is multidisciplinary as well as interdisciplinary.

Life Orientation is potentially a key contributor to social transformation and must be understood against the background of South Africa's social-political history (*cf.* 1.9.2 (i), 'Citizenship education'). Life Orientation is one of the subject areas in the NCS where a "maximum infusion" of human rights issues and concerns occur (DoE 2003c; Carrim & Keet 2005: 101, 103) and requires a "maximal" interpretation of citizenship (*cf.* 1.9.2 (i)).

The focus in this study is on Citizenship education in the FET band as a focus area of Life Orientation in which human rights, diversity, democracy and education will be viewed in relation to one another. Citizenship education is in turn the context in which Religion education receives specific attention (1.8.4).

1.8.3 Citizenship education

In this study, the term ‘citizenship education’ (lower-case c and e) is a generic reference to teaching and learning citizenship across all learning areas/subjects in the school curriculum. The term ‘Citizenship education’ (upper-case C) is an explicit reference to the “subject” or “focus area” in Life Orientation. Explicit learning of citizenship issues, including democracy, diversity and values are undertaken in this context.

The concepts ‘citizenship’ and ‘Citizenship education’ will be explained in more detail for their centrality to this study in a later section in this chapter (*cf.*1.9.1; 1.9.2).

1.8.4 Religion education

In the South African context, the term ‘Religion education’ is used in the national curriculum statements (DoE 2002, 2003a), the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy* (DoE 2001) and the *National Policy on Religion and Education* (DoE 2003b) to refer to the curricular programme for teaching and learning about religion, religions, beliefs and religious diversity in the learning area/subject Life Orientation (DoE 2003a: 11, 2003b: 9). ‘Religion education’ stands in direct contrast to ‘Religious Instruction’ or ‘Religious education’ which is understood to include instruction in a particular faith, with the main purpose being to inculcate adherence to a particular faith (1.2). In some countries ‘Religious education’ is also used to refer to the non-confessionalist subject and has the same meaning as ‘Religion education’ in South Africa (*cf.* Amor 2001; Moore 1991; Chidester 2003b: 3). In this study, ‘Religion education’ as a focus area of Life Orientation must be distinguished from ‘Religion Studies’, the subject which may be chosen as one of six subjects in the FET (Grades 10-12) (DoE 2003a).

Religion education is perceived to be the civic responsibility of the State. Its purpose is to educate “about” diverse religions or beliefs and worldviews and is differentiated from the responsibility of the home, family and communities to instruct or nurture children in the tenets of a particular faith (*cf.* DoE 2001: 44). Religion education is integrated with Citizenship education and acknowledges a common citizenship and freedom from religious discrimination or coercion for all people in South Africa (DoE 2001: 45; DoE 2003b; the *Constitution,* Chapter 2 (9), (15)). The conceptualisation of Religion education in the South African context is consistent with the initiatives of international human rights bodies, such as UNESCO and the Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief, to promote the human right to freedom of religion or belief, tolerance and non-discrimination and thereby to augment appreciation for human diversity (*cf*. Kruger 1998: 47; DoE 2001: 13ff; Amor 2001: 3; Lindholm, Durham, Tahzib-Lie 2004: xxxii; Hull n.d).

In this study Religion education is consistent with its use in the NCS (Grades R-9; Grades 10-12), the *National Policy on Religion and Education* (DoE 2003b) and international human rights bodies such as those referred to above (*cf.* Amor's definition of 'Religious education' cited in 1.1).

1.8.5 Citizenship education/Religion education

As noted in 1.8.4, the NCS FET (DoE 2003a: 11, 13, 25) integrates Religion education with Citizenship education in Life Orientation. Placing Religion education with Citizenship education means that Religion education must be seen to align with the transformative ideals associated with the citizenship education focus area as a whole (*cf.* Chidester 2006: 61; Gearon 2008: 9; Jackson 2003: 78, 2007: 47; Miedema 2007: 267). The role of Religion education as noted in 1.8.4 is to affirm the diverse religions, beliefs and worldviews of individuals and groups, locally and globally, along with other diversities, such as "race", ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation and language. The learning outcomes of Religion education cannot be separated from the outcomes of the democratic approach to Citizenship education as stipulated in the NCS. Although Religion education is the main focus of this study, the term Citizenship education/Religion education will be used so as not to separate Religion education from the transformative and therefore inclusive goals of Citizenship education (DoE 2003a: 11). Religion education has been targeted specifically as a focus area of Citizenship education because it has been insufficiently attended to in INSET programmes as a significant aspect of curriculum reform in the South African context (cf. Chidester 2002a; Chisholm 2005).

1.8.6 Religion, religions and beliefs

The term 'religion' will be used in this study in a generic sense to refer to the totality of all beliefs and practices concerning the transcendent, the sacred, the spiritual, or the ultimate dimensions of human life (*cf.* DoE 2003b: 12; Fisher 1997: 12; Jackson 1997: 52). The plural form 'religions' is used to acknowledge that many different or diverse forms of "ultimate concern" exist which may not necessarily be theistic.

Griffiths (2001: 12) defines religion as "a form of life that seems to those who inhabit it to be comprehensive, incapable of abandonment and of central importance to the ordering of their lives". I have found this definition of religion to be useful on the grounds that it includes theistic and non-theistic ways of believing and practicing. This definition is also useful in that it resists portraying religions as "reified belief systems" or as "bounded systems of belief" (Jackson 1997: 52, 2004a: 88; *cf.* Chidester 1996; Baumann 1996: 16).

The plural form, 'religions', is also used to refer to the denominational differences in religions and variations in worldviews as "forms of life", hence to challenge the reifications of religions as they are referred to in the NCS (DoE 2003a: 25; Jackson 1997: 52, 60; *cf.* Chidester 1996: 2ff). I regard

the reference to religions as "[m]ajor religions: e.g. Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism" in the NCS (DoE 2003a: 25) as problematic since these terms of reference seem to suggest that religions are "bounded and uncontestable systems" (Jackson 1997: 64; Baumann 1996: 16, 17) (*cf.* 3.4.3). Reference to "major religions" also overlooks the prevalence of minority religious groups in South Africa. Consequently, the terms 'religions' and 'beliefs' are used in this study inclusively so as to acknowledge that there is diversity within "major religions". In this study therefore, the terms 'religion' and 'religions' recognise:

- "Major religions" or "World religions", viz. Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism;
- Denominations, traditions or sects within religions (e.g. Roman Catholicism; Reform Judaism; Sufi Islam; African Independent Churches, including the Church of the Nazarites);
- African indigenous or traditional religions;
- New movements such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, Latter Day Saints, Scientology;
- Minority religions, such as Bahai, Rastafari and Wicca.

In an attempt to be inclusive of what constitutes 'religion' or 'belief' in this study, I am in agreement with Chidester (1996), Jackson (1997, 2004a) and others that rigid concepts of religion must be challenged in favour of a more flexible understanding of individual experiences in relation to particular membership groups and religious traditions more generally (*cf.* Lindholm *et al* 2004: xxvii).

The term 'belief/s' is used so as not to exclude non-theistic, atheistic and secular worldviews in generating a knowledge base for Religion education. 'Religion *or* belief' is used to uphold the democratic value and ideal of inclusivity and also to acknowledge the right *not* to profess allegiance to any way of life that would be embraced by the term 'religion' (*cf.* Van der Schyff 2001: 71; Lindholm *et al* 2004: xl).

Understanding religion or belief in this way contributes significantly to the democratic Citizenship education framework within which this study is positioned. The description of this understanding should be read in conjunction with the explanations which follow in the next section of the terms 'culture' and 'pluralist'.

1.8.7 Culture

As is the case with the terms 'religion' and 'religions' there are varied and often controversial descriptions and conceptions of culture. In this study 'culture' is used in the way Nieto (2000: 139) has defined it, as consisting of: "the values, traditions, social and political relationships and

worldviews created, shared, and transformed by a group of people bound together by a common history, geographic location, language, social class and religion".

This view accords with Haviland's (1999: 35) definition of culture as consisting of: "the abstract values, beliefs and perceptions of the world that lie behind peoples' behaviour and that are reflected by their behaviour as shared by members of a society".

A point made by Haviland (1999: 35) that is particularly pertinent to how cultural diversity is conceptualised in this study is that cultures are learned and not inherited biologically. Haviland's point supports Nieto (2000: 140) who cautioned against "static views of culture", on the grounds that when culture is viewed as "unchangeable and unchanging" (ibid), lead to stereotyping and exclusion by dominant cultural groups. In this study, therefore, conceptions of culture that tend towards ethnocentrism or that privilege certain groups rather than others are rejected (Thompson 1990: 126; Baumann 1996: 10). Baumann's (1996: 13) view that the inclinations of individuals and groups to identify with certain elements of culture, or to form "new" culture by bringing different elements of various different "cultures" together, informs this study. This inclination is recognisable amongst the youth in South Africa, particularly in urban areas, and therefore relevant to this study. In reality the tendency exists for individuals or groups to fluctuate between reifying culture and "making, remaking and thus changing it" (Baumann 1996: 13).

Moreover, Thompson's (1990: 145) contention that the way that words, speech or symbols are interpreted by individuals or groups in one context, and yet may acquire a different sense, value or meaning in a different context, is also taken up in this study. Hence, interpreting culture could also mean unravelling "layers of meaning" or "patterns of meaning" embodied in the symbolic forms of different groups in relation to their social contexts (ibid). The concept 'culture' is thus viewed in non-essentialist, fluid or flexible terms.

1.8.8 Pluralist and pluralism

The concepts, 'pluralist' and 'pluralism', are complex and to enter into a discussion of the theories and debates concerning their unpacking in political theory and philosophy goes beyond the scope of this study (*cf.* Skeie 2002; McLennan 1995). 'Pluralist' and 'pluralism' are used in conjunction with diversity. In this study, 'pluralist' is used quantitatively to refer to the multiplicity of ethnic, cultural and religious groups in societies, including indigenous peoples, their ways of life and religion (Grimmitt 1994: 135). 'Diversity' is used qualitatively to refer to human differences or heterogeneity that arise out of pluralism, including ethnicity, religion, belief, gender, sexual orientation, language and ability.

Nieto (2000: 384) and Banks (2002: 131) use the term “cultural pluralism” to refer to a position on pluralism that recognises that people of all backgrounds have a right to maintain their languages, cultures and religions while combining with others to form new societies reflective of all differences. This viewpoint informs this study.

When ‘pluralist’ is used in conjunction with ‘democracy’, the recognition of diversity must be a fundamental principle, the recognition of the equal human rights of all ethnic, cultural and religious groups as well as gender rights and sexual orientation (*cf.* Parekh 2000: 3). The use of ‘pluralist’ in this study challenges the tendency to homogenise or reify groups on ethnic, religious or cultural grounds and takes account of the diversity within, for example, denominations in Christianity or African traditional religions (*cf.* 1.8.6). Pluralism also relates to the varieties of rationalities and philosophies in which individuals and groups engage as they construct truth, meaning and identity (Skeie 2002; *cf.* Jackson 2004a: 8, 9).

1.8.9 Diversity

According to the Bloomsbury Thesaurus (1993: 227), ‘diversity’ means ‘difference’, ‘variety’, ‘multiplicity’, ‘heterogeneity’. The Webster’s Dictionary (1979: 537) defines ‘diversity’ as the “quality, state, fact or instance of being diverse; difference”.

Although diversity is expressed in different literary contexts in terms of ethnicity, race, language, social class, religion, beliefs, gender, sexual orientation and ability (amongst others), the focus in this study is primarily on the diversity embedded in Religion education, namely diversity of religions or beliefs, secular viewpoints or worldviews, as well as ethnic and cultural diversity (DoE 2003b). Ethnic and cultural diversity are included because religion, culture and ethnicity influence one other at different levels (Parekh 2000: 147). As Parekh points out, some cultures are primarily derived from and are heavily dependent on religion. In others religion is only one source of influence and may be challenged by other ways of thinking such as science, secular morality and critical reasoning.

In this study, diversity is related specifically to teaching and learning “about” religions and beliefs, religious, ethnic and cultural diversity (Grimmitt 2008; Jackson 1997, 2004a; Everington 2009: 29), but not excluding other aspects, since diversity is taken to be a human right and a liberal value (Gutmann 1996; Young 1997, 2000).

1.8.10 Secular and secularity

Whilst being conscious of debates about the concepts ‘secular’ and ‘secularist’ (Arthur, Gearon & Sears 2010: 26ff), and the negative connotations assigned by various religious groups to

'secularity' being anti-religious (Jackson 2004a: 24, 174), this is not the view supported in this study. In this study 'secular' is used in conjunction with the democratic right of individuals and communities to freedom of religion or belief (Jackson 2004a: 165), or as Talal Asad (2003: 1) puts it, "secular" refers to an "epistemic category" and "secularism" to a political doctrine. 'Secular' and 'secularity' refer to the "impartiality" (Jackson 1997: 136) of the State towards any particular religion, belief or ideology, as is the case in South Africa after 1994, and as affirmed in the *National Policy on Religion and Education* (DoE 2003b; *cf.* Prinsloo 2008).

Secularity and pluralism are based on the idea that people should be allowed to make up their own minds about religious and ideological matters (Smart 1968: 7). Secularity ought to guarantee the freedom of religion or belief and at the very least promote the values of social justice and tolerance (*cf*. 1.9.3 (iv)). A secular stance towards religion in education does not prohibit teaching and learning about diverse religions and beliefs. Both secularity and pluralism are necessary preconditions for freedom of religion or belief (*cf.* Gildenhuys 2002: 3). According to Charles Taylor (2007: 3), secularity suggests that "belief in God is not axiomatic" (ibid), but is viewed as "one option among others" (ibid). This is the perspective that underpins this study.

1.9 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Various terms which contribute broadly towards the conceptual framework of this study will be clarified in this section. These concepts belong to the domain of democracy theory, but will be defined at this point and not in the chapter devoted to the theoretical framework, viz. Chapter 3, since these concepts provide the liberal and inclusive underpinnings of this study as a whole.

The conceptual framework contributes towards defining how communities of practice provide a learning context for the principles of deliberative democracy (as communicative and co-operative) espoused in this study. Since Citizenship education includes difference and learning the values associated with living in a world of difference (*cf.* Roux, Du Preez & Ferguson 2009: 67ff), this section includes what I have perceived to be fundamental to developing a knowledge base for teachers of Citizenship education/Religion education. This knowledge base includes the skills required to manage, facilitate and mediate the complex integration of knowledge and pedagogy relevant for democratic Citizenship education.

1.9.1 Citizen and Citizenship

Whilst I recognise that citizenship is a contested concept (Yuval-Davis 1999: 120; McLaughlin 1992: 236), that different communities hold different views as to what a citizen is or what constitutes citizenship, in this study a citizen is taken as a member of a polity who enjoys the rights and assumes the duties of membership of that society (Jackson 2003: 2; Stradling 2009: 13ff). In addition, this study also carries a wider conceptualisation of citizenship, "world citizenship", as

Nussbaum puts it (1997), humans "bound to all other human beings by ties of recognition and concern" (Nussbaum 2002: 295). Hence, the starting point for understanding citizenship within the context of a liberal pluralist democracy recognises the equal human rights of whoever is resident in it, including foreign nationals who are temporary residents and refugees. The reason for this inclusion is related to the reference to "xenophobia and other forms of discrimination" in the NCS FET (DoE 2003a: 11).

The concepts 'citizen' and 'citizenship' in the South African context must be understood in relation to post-apartheid constitutional and legislative processes (Porteus 2002: 221) as well as the period of struggle against apartheid that preceded it (Enslin 2003: 73). The citizen is viewed as having the potential to participate actively in democratic and political processes in the widest sense, in a "maximal" sense as McLaughlin (1992) maintained, upholding democratic ideals and not merely voting in local and national elections (Gearon 2004: 12; Young 2000: 22). Citizenship is not viewed only in terms of the relationship between individuals and the nation-state, but rather as Yuval-Davis (1999: 122) has suggested, as a "multi-layered construct". In this sense, citizenship may be local, ethnic or cultural, national, state, cross-state, trans-state and supra-state (ibid; *cf.* Stradling 2009: 15ff), recognising differences in terms of ethnicity, gender, religion, belief, sexual orientation, language and culture. The NCS FET (DoE 2003a: 13) associates citizenship with active participation in community life, as well as the values of responsibility, non-discrimination and acceptance of diversity. This conception of citizenship undergirds this study.

1.9.2 Democratic Citizenship education

(i) Citizenship education

In various countries citizenship education is either a subject in its own right or integrated across various subject areas in the school curriculum. In the South African context Citizenship education is the second of the four focus areas that contribute towards Life Orientation in the FET band[8] (*cf.* 1.8.3), hence Citizenship education has a particular knowledge base of its own. The knowledge, skills and values associated with Citizenship education, however, are meant to be integrated into the other three focus areas (*cf.* 1.3; 1.8.3) that constitute Life Orientation, as well as infused into other subjects across the curriculum.

A review of the literature on Citizenship education reveals that this aspect of education cannot be defined in isolation of international trends towards Citizenship education in pluralist, democratic societies. Citizenship education is highly topical in education in many countries and is concerned with preparing young people for the challenges associated with change in a globalising world (Kerr

[8] At the time of writing (2010), the Department of Basic Education had very recently released its final draft of amendments to the NCS in which Citizenship education is replaced with "Democracy and human rights" as a "topic" in Life Orientation (DoE 2010: 7).

2002: 7, 2003: 2; Gearon 2004; Jackson 2007: 30; Miedema & Bertram-Troost 2008). Kerr's (2002) international review of Citizenship education provides a comprehensive overview of the factors that shape it, as well as interpretations of and approaches to it in school curricula. Some of the most pertinent observations made by Kerr will be outlined in this exposition of Citizenship education, as these provide a backdrop to understanding the aims, organisation and structure of Citizenship education in the present South African context and hence for this study. The way in which Citizenship education is presented in any national curriculum has implications for teacher development and for teacher-learning for effective practice in this area (*cf.* Chapter 2). Furthermore, how teachers themselves interpret Citizenship education has implications for the selection of content and strategies for learning and teaching.

According to Kerr (2002: 6), Citizenship education should be broadly construed as encompassing the preparation of young people for their roles and responsibilities as citizens. Based on his review of Citizenship education in sixteen countries, Kerr (2002: 5, 7) found that the aims, organisation and structure of Citizenship education can be fully understood only by recognising the role of context on its conceptualisation (Kerr 2003: 3; *cf.* Skeie 2006: 29). Kerr (2002: 8) identified historical tradition, geographical position, socio-political structure, economic system and global trends as the key influences on how Citizenship education is defined and approached in different countries (*cf.* Gearon 2004: 10, 11). Moreover, a key factor to be considered in Citizenship education as a subject is the extent to which values and dispositions are articulated in the classroom. With regard to values, Kerr (2002: 9) identified three broad categories of approaches to Citizenship education pertaining to how values are expressed:

- minimal reference to values in education legislation;
- national values expressed in general terms;
- national values expressed in detail.

Kerr (2002: 9) suggests that these three broad categories "correspond with one of the major tensions countries face in approaching Citizenship education, viz. the extent to which it is possible to identify, agree and articulate the values and dispositions which underpin citizenship". Put in another way, there is often disagreement with whether Citizenship education should be "values-explicit" or "values-neutral" (Kerr 2002: 9; *cf.* Stradling 2009: 21).

Kerr (2002: 9) explains that "values-explicit" approaches promote distinct values which are part of a broader, nationally accepted system of public values and beliefs. "Values-neutral" approaches take a neutral stance to values and controversial issues, leaving decisions to the individual (ibid). The tension implied here ("values-explicit" or "values-neutral) is part of the broader debate about the balance between the public and private dimensions of citizenship. In this regard, McLaughlin

(1992: 236; *cf.* Kerr 2002: 10) differentiates between “maximal” and “minimal” interpretations of citizenship education. Those who view citizenship as a largely “public” concern see a major or “thick” role for education in the promotion of citizenship and therefore of values. This occurs through the school or formal curriculum. Those who view citizenship as a largely “private” affair see a much more limited, or “thin” role for education and envisage a much stronger role for the family and community organisations than for teachers with regard to citizenship education and values education (Kerr 2002: 10). When values-explicit approaches are associated with school ethos and clearly defined in the national curriculum, the professional knowledge base and pedagogical skills of the teacher are significant for assisting learners to realise citizenship education outcomes in the school context.

It must be noted, however, that values-explicit approaches to citizenship education are commonly criticised for promoting bias and the indoctrination of learners (Kerr 2002: 10). I suggest that this view could be differently interpreted in one of two ways. First, there are those who are opponents of the explicit democratic values identified by the state as being necessary to promote social cohesion and freedom, such as equality, tolerance, mutual respect, diversity and inclusivity (Chidester 2006: 63; Chambers & Carver/Connolly 2008: 61). A reason for such a position lies, as Chambers & Carver (2008: 61) put it, with attempts “to define political issues in a vocabulary of God”. Second, there are those who are advocates of liberalism and the idea of the open society, who are possibly opponents of narrow, exclusivist positions towards diversity. Values-neutral approaches in education, however, are attacked also for their failure to help learners to deal adequately with “real-life, controversial issues” (Kerr 2002: 10), including issues of religious diversity and lifestyle choices.

Kerr (2002, 2003) contends that attempts to define and redefine citizenship and Citizenship education are associated with the rapid pace of change in the modern world and the common sets of challenges or issues that change has produced (Kerr 2002: 11, 2003: 2). Such challenges include cultural and religious diversity resulting from the movement of people within and across national boundaries and living in increasingly diverse communities and societies; the growing recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities; the changing roles of women in society; and an increasing global population resulting in the creation of new forms of community (Kerr 2002: 11, 2003: 2; Gearon 2004: 11). These challenges in turn touch on complex issues concerning pluralism, multiculturalism, ethnic and cultural heritage, tolerance, social cohesion, collective and individual rights and responsibilities, social justice, consciousness of national identity, and freedom, among others (Kerr 2002: 12).

Social realities such as those identified by Kerr require nation-states to rethink and redefine citizenship and citizenship education on the grounds that pluralism raises questions concerning

the rights and responsibilities of individuals and religious and/or cultural groups, including the rights to an education and the rights of people to maintain components of their community cultures (Banks 2002: 131; Kerr 2003: 2). Although countries and communities have similar sets of national aims in dealing with these challenges and issues, including the aim of promoting citizenship and democratic values, they approach those aims in different ways. The education system becomes a powerful tool for maximising learning "about", "through" and "for" citizenship in a pluralist democracy and is therefore a vital part of the response to these challenges (Kerr 2002: 14). The extent to which citizenship and democratic values are promoted in a country, however, is dependent on the broad contextual factors noted earlier in this discussion (ibid: 8, 12).

McLaughlin (1992: 236; *cf.* Kerr 2002: 12, 13; Jackson 2007: 31, 32) has argued that citizenship education is "conceptualised and contested" along a continuum which ranges from a "minimal" to a "maximal" interpretation. Each end of the continuum displays different characteristics which affect the definition of, and approach, to citizenship education. Minimal interpretations of citizenship education are characterised by narrow definitions of citizenship. They offer a "thin" role for education and seek to promote particular or exclusive interests, such as the granting of citizenship to certain groups in society only. Minimal interpretations promote civics education which offers narrow, formal and content led approaches to citizenship education. These approaches are "teacher-fed" or transmission-oriented, usually based on promoting specific kinds of knowledge (Kerr 2002: 13; Baumfield 2003: 174; Jackson 2007: 32), leaving little opportunity or encouragement for student interaction and creativity.

Maximal interpretations are characterised by broader definitions of citizenship. These kinds of approaches tend to offer a "thick" role for education in promoting democratic values. They tend to be inclusive and involve all groups and interests in society. Maximal interpretations lead to a mixture of formal and informal approaches to teaching and learning in citizenship education, in the sense of actively encouraging interactive investigation and interpretation by teachers and their learners of the many different ways in which the components of citizenship education, including diversity, are determined and performed in a democratic society (Baumfield 2003: 178). The primary aim of adopting a maximal approach is not only to inform, but also to use information to help learners to understand and to enhance their capacity to participate in the workings of a democratic society (McLaughlin 1992: 239). Pedagogically structured opportunities are created for learner interaction through discussion, debate and deliberation. Learner initiative is encouraged also through various forms of independent learning and participative experiences (Kerr 2002: 13; Baumfield 2003: 176; Jackson 2007: 32; *cf.* Young 2000: 24; Gutmann 1987: 89).

Citizenship education in the South African context becomes clearer against the background provided by Kerr (2002, 2003; *cf.* Gearon 2008: 97) and also in the light of McLaughlin's (1992:

240) differentiation between “maximal” and “minimal” interpretations of citizenship and the implications of these categories for Citizenship education. As noted in the explanation of ‘Citizenship’ above (1.9.1), Citizenship education in South Africa must also be understood in the context of pre- and post-apartheid constitutional and legislative processes (Porteus 2002: 221; Enslin 2003: 73). This is the context which has shaped the conception of Citizenship education in South Africa. While the purpose of Citizenship education in South Africa resonates with Kerr’s point that Citizenship education is to prepare young people for the challenges associated with changes in a globalising world, the apartheid system, as Porteus (2002: 222) points out, has “undeniably left a profound and unique impact on the social fabric of South African society”. There is, therefore, a need for restoration, social transformation, nation-building and peaceful co-existence in the post-apartheid era which, Citizenship education should be committed to addressing (DoE 2003a: 11; *cf.* 2.1.3).

Moreover, education in general in post-apartheid South Africa has been concerned with redefining the core values of the nation (Porteus 2002: 221). The *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy* (DoE 2001) outlines six qualities that the education system should actively promote. These are equity, tolerance, multilingualism, openness, accountability and social honour (DoE 2001: iii). In addition to these six qualities, the writers of the *Manifesto* identified ten constitutional values to which all citizens should aspire, viz. democracy, social justice and equity, equality, non-racism and non-sexism, *ubuntu* (human dignity), an open society, accountability (responsibility), the rule of law, respect and reconciliation. The point of these values is to put the *Constitution* into action and to advance the idea that the education system “does not exist to simply serve a market” (DoE 2001: 10), but also to shape citizens who are able to participate meaningfully and responsibly in society. The explicit ways in which these qualities and values have been described in the *Manifesto* clearly contribute towards a “values-explicit”, “thick” conception of citizenship education (Kerr 2002: 10; Enslin *et al* 2001: 116) and call for a maximal interpretation in which teachers and learners participate in the propagation of these values.

The approach to Citizenship education adopted in this study promotes a “values-explicit”, “thick” conception of Citizenship education, with a maximal interpretation (McLaughlin 1992: 236, 237), the reason being that the way in which the knowledge base is compiled for Citizenship education, including appropriate pedagogical strategies, will be defined in relation to a model of democracy that favours a “more fully participatory approach” (ibid: 237). On the grounds that diversity plays a central role in this study, equality, tolerance, openness, inclusion, mutuality and reciprocity underpinned by reasonableness are specifically identified as being core values (1.9.3) of a “thick” conception or maximal interpretation of Citizenship education (*cf.* Gould 1988: 284ff; Young 2000: 23, 24; Nussbaum 1997: 9, 10; Gearon 2004: 14). Along with participation and communication

these core values are deemed essential to developing “practice” in relation to communities of practice dealt with in 3.4.4.

(ii) Problems with Citizenship education

The trend in education around the world is to make the notion of citizenship explicit as a response to social and political changes in nation-states. The problem however is related to the reality that while democratic values such as tolerance, mutual respect, equality and social justice resonate with the moral teachings of religions, they may also be in conflict with those teachings. A project integral to Citizenship education, therefore, is to engage learners in democratic discussion or dialogue in which differences are negotiated, challenged, debated (Gearon 2004: 14) and “taken seriously” (Barnes 2009: 47; *cf.* Young 2000: 18).

However, not all teachers, parents, communities or school governing bodies share in the liberal values espoused by democratic Citizenship education. Including a study of diverse religions and beliefs in the school curriculum, as well as making reference to the various freedoms associated with the *Constitution*, such as abortion, sexual orientation and individual autonomy, have been rejected by teachers and parents from conservative religious communities (Chidester 2006: 62; Roux 2007b: 104; Pike 2008: 114; Chambers & Carver/Connolly 2008: 61). Various Christian groups in South Africa did not welcome the introduction of the *National Policy on Religion and Education* (2003). These groups rejected the secular nature of the *Constitution* (*cf.* Chidester 2006: 62) as well as an approach to religion in education that promotes learning about all religions, assuming the superiority of their own beliefs over ‘others’. They have argued for the preservation of confessional Religious education in schools and hence the “advancement of God’s kingdom on earth” (Chidester 2006: 62, 2003b: 6) (*cf.* Chambers & Carver/Connolly 2008: 61) (1.9.2 (i)).

In approaching this study, I acknowledged that rejection of religious diversity and intolerance towards the identity and viewpoints of others may be expressed by teachers and parents. However, the idea of teachers learning in communities of practice is aimed at addressing these attitudes and dispositions as well as the incompatibilities between religions, denominations and worldviews (Griffiths 2001: 35). Learning in communities provides opportunities for Life Orientation teachers to deliberate with one another in a reflective and reasonable way (Young 2000: 24; Nussbaum 2004: 3), to share their own biographies, and hence to listen and learn from one another (Swidler 2004: 767). Proponents of transformative learning theory argue that in developing educational leaders, teachers (as adult learners) need to examine their own histories and tacit assumptions about the beliefs and values of others before they can initiate transformation in education (Brown 2004: 81). This perspective will be examined in more depth in Chapter 3.2.

1.9.3 Deliberative democracy

The literature on deliberative democracy is extensive and complex. For the purposes of this study, a model of deliberative democracy will be proposed to guide teacher-learning in communities of practice (1.7; 3.4.3) and also to justify including learning about diverse religions, beliefs and worldviews as an aspect of Citizenship education. The pluralist, multicultural character of South African society presents various challenges for Citizenship education, which also need to be considered in developing a professional knowledge base for teachers of Life Orientation as a whole. It is therefore necessary to highlight the democratic processes that are envisaged for both teachers and learners in order to further the outcomes of a "thick", values explicit, maximal interpretation of Citizenship education (1.9.2 (i)).

For the purposes of Citizenship education, the differences between aggregative and deliberative models of democracy must be emphasised, since one could argue that an aggregative model which depends entirely on an opinion poll is inadequate for solving problems involving conflicting interests in situations where peaceful co-existence and justice would be at stake. Iris Marion Young (2000: 19) defines an aggregative model of democracy: "as a process of aggregating the preferences of citizens in choosing public officials or policies". Such a model is the mechanism for identifying and aggregating the preferences of citizens through the voting process. Hence decisions are based on the greatest number of votes. However necessary this process might be for selecting representatives or making a decision on policy in a polity, Young (2000: 20) advocates that the aggregative model of democracy "offers no way to evaluate the moral legitimacy of the substance of decisions" (ibid: 21). Citizens will not have arrived at a decision through interaction and as a result not all members of a polity will have had equal opportunity to reach a decision that involves some need or claim (*cf.* Bohman 1996: 5).

Young (2000: 22) and various other theorists (Gutmann 1987; Bohman 1996; Nussbaum 1997; *cf*. Brookfield 2005) present deliberative democracy as a more just alternative to aggregative democracy. Deliberative democracy places high regard on the participation of citizens in the decision-making processes of public life in democracies (Young 2000: 22, 25; Bohman 1996: 5; Gould 1988: 284, 285). Participation and co-operation with others are intrinsic to deliberative democracy as well as the necessity to engage in reasoned argument with a view to attending to the common good. Hence, the first characteristic of deliberative democracy that is a central focus of this study, viz. teacher-learning through participation in communities of practice, is communication. The democratic process, according to Young (2000: 22), "is primarily a discussion of problems, conflicts and claims of need or interest". Communication occurs dialogically to test and challenge proposals and arguments (Young 2000: 22; *cf.* Mezirow 1991: 77; Swidler 2004: 769), so that, as Bohman (1996: 4) argues, decisions are not merely imposed upon citizens. When deliberation takes the form of dialogue, citizens exercise their moral powers as free and equal

persons (ibid: 7). Bohman (1996: 24) names various models of deliberative democracy, but argues primarily for an account of deliberation based on dialogue. Bohman (1996: 24) maintains that it is only in dialogue with others, "in speaking to them, answering them and taking up their views", that the many diverse capacities for deliberation are exercised jointly (*cf.* Swidler 2004: 770). Public dialogue is possible therefore even with those with whom one disagrees (Bohman 1996: 24; Young 2000: 18).

Various debates exist in political theory with regard to how social differentiations, including religions, beliefs and worldviews, should be taken up in determining the common good (Young 1997: 385). In some models of deliberative democracy, the equal rights of citizens are foremost, but at the expense of acknowledging cultural particularities. In others, cultural diversity is viewed as a democratic value and the recognition of particular identities is integral to treating all as free and equal citizens (Gutmann 1994: 4, 5). The model of deliberative democracy proposed here recognises the particular religious and cultural identities of all people with a view to upholding the democratic values of tolerance, mutual respect, equality and the dignity of all (Gould 1988: 284ff; Gutmann 1994: 3; Young 1997: 383).

The position taken on diversity in this study therefore is one of inclusion, based on Young's (1997, 2000) conception of a communicative model of democratic inclusion. Inclusion is the second characteristic of deliberative democracy integral to this study. Inclusion in Young's terms (2000: 23) means that all people involved in decision-making processes will have equal opportunity to express their interests, opinions and perspectives in seeking solutions to problems. Furthermore, Young (1997: 385, 2000: 81) argues that social differentiations such as culture, religion, gender, race, sexuality, national origin and class should be regarded as resources in determining the common good (Young 2000: 81). Inclusion also means the recognition of every individual or group's cultural and/or religious identity, but without falling into the trap of social group designations that enforce stereotypes or caricatures (Young 1997: 386). In relation to teacher-learning about diversity, inclusion widens the scope for exposure to different cultural, religious and intellectual perspectives and thereby increases the opportunities for intellectual growth (Rockefeller 1994: 91). As an ideal, inclusion embodies a norm of mutual respect, as diversity is affirmed and people with diverse identities are treated as free and equal citizens (Gutmann 1994: 4; Rockefeller 1994: 90; Young 2000: 23).

Emanating from this last point, the third characteristic of deliberative democracy for this study is shaped by the view that deliberation needs to be morally informed (Gutmann 1996: 161). It is for this reason that various political theorists defend values such as equality, autonomy, tolerance, mutuality, reciprocity and respect as values necessary for democracy to succeed. In fact, the stability of the theoretical frame to guide teacher-learning through participation in communities of

practice for Citizenship education is dependent on the recognition of such democratic values (Gould 1988: 284ff; Young 2000: 26ff; Enslin *et al* 2001). An overview of these values follows to make the meaning assigned to them in this study explicit, not only as democratic values, but also as the ethical tools for inter-religious, intercultural and cross-cultural understanding and appreciation (*cf.* Nussbaum 2004; Le Roux & Möller 2002: 185).

(i) Equality

A basic premise underlying this study is the acknowledgement of the human right to equality, meaning that all people have equal, effective opportunities to express their interests and concerns as members of a public. This right is grounded in the *Constitution* (1996, 9 (1)) guaranteeing non-discrimination either by the State or individuals on one or more of the following grounds: race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.

Hence, in a public context, all people ought to have equal and effective opportunities to question one another and to respond to and criticise one another's proposals and arguments. A condition of equality is that people must be free from domination, but actions are also limited in that people are not permitted to coerce or threaten others into accepting certain proposals, outcomes or beliefs (Young 2000: 23). As a democratic value, equality may be problematic in relation to how people with particular religious identities respond to religious diversity (*cf.* Rockefeller 1994: 88; Ter Avest & Bakker 2009: 13).

Equality can be better understood in relation to tolerance, mutuality and reciprocity.

(ii) Reciprocity

Reciprocity is a disposition which citizens in a democracy should continuously strive to maintain (Gutmann 1996: 160). According to Gould (1988: 290), reciprocity is relational and expressible only in a situation of social interaction. In relation to equality, reciprocity involves the ability to understand the perspective of another as equivalent to one's own. Reciprocity is also connected to recognition - recognition of individuals or groups with whom one is associated as *equal* agents (Gould 1988: 291). Gould suggests that such recognition would include: "respect for others as individuals with purposes of their own and respect for their rights, where these rights include their basic equal rights as human beings and their specific rights within a given institutional structure" (ibid). Respect must, however, always happen both ways. When one acts with respect for the other, one does so in ways that are "equivalent to the other's actions", while expecting that the other will understand and act similarly (ibid). In relation to diversity, reciprocity of perspectives goes beyond the limits of one's own view and makes possible the establishment of a shared point of view as well as an explicit understanding of differences in point of view. When religious and/or

cultural differences are in focus, when theological or dogmatic differences are unlikely to be resolved (*cf.* Griffiths 2001), then, as Gould (1988: 292) maintains, it may be necessary to put procedures into place "for agreeing to disagree".

(iii) Mutuality and mutual respect

Mutuality is closely related to reciprocity in that an individual considers the needs of another, and both undertake to enhance the other's self development (Gould 1988: 292). Mutual respect is also referred to as "social reciprocity" by Gould (1988: 292). Gutmann (1996: 160) maintains that mutual respect should be a crucial aim of democratic education:

> Mutual respect is a public good as well as a private good in a democratic society. It expresses the equal standing of every person as an individual and as a citizen. It also enables democratic citizens to discuss their political differences in a productive way, first by understanding one another's perspectives and then by trying to find fair ways of resolving their disagreements.

Mutual respect is reviewed in relation to 'tolerance' in the next section.

(iv) Tolerance and toleration

A vast literature exists on the meaning and use of the concept 'tolerance' (Afdal 2006: 86ff)[9]. The discussion that follows is limited in doing justice to this vast literature. What follows therefore, is a description of the position that I have taken towards tolerance as a democratic value for the purposes of this study.

Afdal (2006: 89) shows that the terms 'tolerance' and 'toleration' are used either (i) interchangeably, or (ii) with distinct meaning in the literature. With regard to (ii), 'toleration' is usually used at a theoretical level to refer to a state's obligation to recognise and accept (tolerate) the existence of a diversity of beliefs, opinions and life orientations among its citizens (Plesner 2004: 791; Horton 1993: 1), while tolerance is used descriptively to refer to individual or group attitudes (Afdal 2006: 89; Plesner 2004: 791). With regard to (i), 'tolerance' or 'toleration' could be used randomly as a blanket term to refer to either the state's position towards plurality *and* individual or group attitudes towards plurality (*cf.* Avery 2002: 113). In this study, the possible differences in meaning between 'tolerance' and 'toleration' are not of any real concern, but toleration will be used with respect to the promotion of freedom of religion or belief at state level and tolerance at the individual or at group levels (*cf.* Afdal 2006: 89). The disposition of individuals or groups to recognising the rights of others to "freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion" (*The Constitution*, 1996, 15 (1)) was of great concern in this study. However, it was noted that toleration as an ideal of the state may not be emulated at individual or group level, or in school

[9] *cf.* Afdal (2006) *Tolerance and Curriculum*, in which he examines the complexity of "tolerance" from a practical, conceptual and theoretical perspective.

contexts, where tensions and conflicts might exist in terms of incompatible beliefs, practices and values (Horton 1993: 1).

In South Africa, tolerance has shaped the *Constitution* (1996, 9 (3) (4); 15(1) (2) (3)) and thereafter is mirrored in the NCS (DoE 2002, 2003a) and other support documents[10]. In liberal states, state toleration of different religions or beliefs and hence the protection of the right to freedom of religion or belief follows on the principles of equal human rights and equality before the law (Plesner 2004: 792; *cf.* the *Constitution*, Chapter 2, 15 (1)). Consequently, the state is obliged to accept (tolerate) the existence of a diversity of beliefs, opinions and worldviews among its citizens (Plesner 2004: 791). The state is also obliged to respect the freedom of its inhabitants to change their religion or belief, as well as the freedom to manifest this liberty alone or in community with others, in teaching, practice, worship or observance (ibid: 792).

Tolerance is usually defined as being “an attitude” or “disposition” (Gould 1988: 292; Plesner 2004: 792) amongst inhabitants of a polity towards people who hold differing convictions or who lead their lives in ways that are perceived as being different from the norms of a particular society. When tolerance is found to be inadequate in defining attitudes towards difference in a pluralist society, this may be because it is an expression of negative liberty, viz. it is freedom *from* interference (Gould 1988: 292; *cf.* Afdal 2006: 92), or as Parekh (2000: 1) suggests, it implies “conceding the validity of society’s disapproval and relying on its self-restraint”. Hence, by its very definition, tolerance assumes disapproval or dislike, highlighting problems that some individuals or groups have in accepting diversity.

Conversely, a positive position towards tolerance is reflected in Avery’s (2002: 113) definition of political tolerance as: “the willingness to extend basic rights and civil liberties to those with whom one disagrees”. Avery maintains that tolerance is one of the most difficult and important tests of a pluralist, liberal democracy (ibid) on the grounds that at least one group or individual may hold views that violate another’s core beliefs in some way. In a liberal democracy tolerance is necessary to allow the democratic ideals of liberty, justice, freedom of expression and minority rights to prosper (ibid; Horton 1993: 1). Avery (2002: 127) maintains that cultivating the willingness to extend civil liberties to those groups whose ideas one finds objectionable represents one of the enduring challenges of a liberal pluralist democracy. This is because tolerance, as with other democratic principles, requires much effort and ongoing commitment and needs to be taught. People are not born tolerant (Avery 2002: 127; Banks 1997: 1).

Arguing from a critical multicultural perspective, Nieto (2000) positions tolerance on the lowest rung

[10] Tolerance as a value is clearly behind the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy* (DoE 2001) and the *National Policy on Religion and Education* (DoE 2003b).

of four levels of support for diversity. She defines what it means to be tolerant in the following way: "To be tolerant means to have the capacity to bear something, although at times it may be unpleasant. To tolerate differences means to endure them, although not necessarily embrace them" (ibid: 340). Although this explanation of tolerance seems to be stated in positive terms, in terms of being tolerant, "differences are borne as the *inevitable burden* (my emphasis) of a culturally pluralistic society". It is for this reason that Nieto proposes that "acceptance" is the next level after tolerance of support for diversity. By accepting differences we at least acknowledge them without denying their importance (ibid).

"Respect" is the third level and, "affirmation, solidarity and critique" the fourth. Respect, according to Nieto (2000: 340) means "to admire and hold in high esteem". When diversity is respected it becomes the basis of the education offered at a school as a whole. When teachers and learners are exposed to different ways of approaching the same reality, they expand ways of looking at the world. As democratic values, the affirmation of diversity, solidarity and critique (the fourth level) are the most powerful learning results to be hoped for when learners are able to work through their differences, even if these outcomes are difficult to achieve at times (ibid; *cf.* Young 2000: 17).

Gould (1988: 292) agrees that tolerance is limited in itself and must be related to the dispositions of mutuality and reciprocity (*cf*. 1.9.3 (ii), (iii)). Gould argues that "social reciprocity", her term for respect, is required for democracy. Like Nieto (2000), Gould maintains that social reciprocity or respect takes the mere acknowledgement of difference to a higher level when mutual understanding becomes the goal of democratic communication (Gould 1988: 292, 293). However, tolerance is limited to the recognition that individuals or groups have the right to believe and behave as they want, provided that their practices and behaviours do not conflict with the overarching values and goals of a democratic state (Banks 1997: 123). Hence, in recognising the particularity of different cultures and religions, we should not downplay the nature of the particular when in reality these may be violations of the basic rights of individuals.

Since tolerance is regarded in this research as a necessary starting point for teacher-learning about diversity, attention is also drawn to what tolerance is not.

First, as Avery (2002: 114) points out, tolerance does not entail the *approval* of an individual or group's beliefs, ideas or actions, nor does it suggest indifference. The "tolerant stance" towards difference in a pluralist democracy is an acknowledgement of *everyone's right* to enjoyment of the basic liberties of a democracy (ibid). Hence the teacher's disapproval of a particular set of beliefs or a worldview different from his or her own does not provide the grounds for excluding such topics from the classroom.

Second, tolerance does not mean silence. Tolerance implies that judgements can be made only after careful consideration of multiple perspectives and competing values. Ignoring particular problems or experiences, especially those of minority or marginalised groups could be viewed as non-recognition or discrimination, but not as tolerance (Avery 2002: 115; *cf.* Young 2000: 37). Nieto (2000: 43, 139; *cf.* Le Roux & Möller 2002: 184) aptly points out that silence on any aspect of diversity renders learners invisible and also devalues their backgrounds. Furthermore, when some views are silenced, important considerations are likely to be neglected.

Third, tolerance as a democratic value cannot be selective or partial in its application. Tolerance must be understood as being pervasive (*cf.* Nieto 2000: 312), or all-embracing, or inclusive of the different aspects of diversity named in the equality clause of the *Constitution* (1996, 9 (3) (4)). Nieto (2000: 305) argues that education for democracy in a pluralist society rejects *all* forms of discrimination and accepts and affirms the ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, philosophical and gender differences (amongst others) represented in a school community. Just as a multicultural approach to education should pervade the "school climate" (Nieto 2000: 313), so should tolerance of all aspects of being "pervade" the way in which teachers and learners think and respond towards diversity (ibid: 312). However, as Avery (2002: 121) also states, learning about tolerance means learning about conflict and how we resolve conflict. Conflict is inevitable in a democratic, pluralist society because of the myriad perspectives that are present (*cf.* Gearon 2004: 11).

Deep disagreement can arise when various social groups have very different beliefs, values, perspectives and assumptions. Young (2000: 44) believes that the sources and terms of disagreement are exactly what everyone should come to understand if they are to do justice to dialogical opportunities. Learning about deep differences (racial, ethnic, religious or cultural) and the sources of those differences in order to understand them is integral to learning tolerance.

I have opted in this study to re-appropriate tolerance as a democratic value, on the grounds that the word is used often in public discourse to capture the disposition that should exist between citizens in relation to human difference. Tolerance, alongside equality, mutuality, reciprocity, respect and affirmation, is regarded as being integral to maintaining the stability of communities of practice in which diversity of religion and belief is the domain of interest (*cf*. 3.4.4.1).

1.10 RESEARCHER'S VOICE

I have chosen to write this dissertation using the first person in order to demonstrate my agency as the researcher in this study (*cf.* Taylor 2001: 17). As this research was both participatory and interpretive, my own perspective and presence played a significant role in shaping both the survey and the participatory action research (PAR) cyclical stages. Hence, as both the researcher and a

co-participant with the three teachers in the PAR phase, my involvement needs to be made explicit so as to differentiate between my perspective on the research and the contributions of the participants in their particular social contexts, viz. their schools and neighbourhoods (Holliday 2002: 129).

In the reporting of this research it is necessary to reveal my own historical, geographical and social situatedness as well as the personal investment that I bring to the research (Taylor 2001: 17; Gergen & Gergen 2000: 1027; *cf.* Anderson 2006: 375; Mertens 2009: 40). My own biographical "narrative" comprises the following:

- I am a white woman who teaches pre-service teachers in a multicultural school of education in a secular, liberal university.
- My own frame of reference was influenced by apartheid education, a liberal university education and the experience of teaching in a "whites-only" college of education, which slowly transformed into a racially inclusive institution, to eventually merge with a university to reconstitute its school of education.
- I was born in the city of Johannesburg, was educated there and have continued to work there. My urban experiences have shaped my frame of reference and my disposition towards diversity.
- The shift in my personal religious experiences, from Protestant Christian to a more secular humanist and non-affiliated worldview, influenced my interest in the human right to freedom of religion or belief and how this right influences other rights.
- On the grounds that my segregated education and teacher training were similar to those of many teachers presently in service, it was of interest to me how teachers with different ethnic and religious backgrounds would respond to the reforms in the national curriculum, especially to the introduction of Citizenship education with its emphasis on democracy, diversity and the notion of inclusivity.

It must be noted that working in the community of practice with the participants involved me in the research as a full member, visible to the participants at all times (Anderson 2006: 375). However, as Anderson has shown in relation to research that has an auto-ethnographic approach, this research was committed to an "analytic research agenda focused on improving theoretical understandings" (ibid), in this case, of teachers learning about Citizenship education/Religion education in close proximity to colleagues in a community of practice. This brief overview of my position as researcher underlies the approach to the research and strategies of inquiry that guided the research process.

1.11 RESEARCH DESIGN, STRATEGIES OF INQUIRY AND RESEARCH PROCESS

The study was empirical in nature. A mixed methods approach, whereby both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed in a single study, was implemented (Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998; Creswell 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004). An overview of the research design and process is presented in this section. A more detailed description of the research design is presented in Chapter 4.2 (cf. Figure 4.1).

1.11.1 Research design: a mixed methods approach

In order to pursue the research questions central to this study, a cross-sectional survey was conducted followed by a phase of participatory action research (PAR) (Creswell 2003: 216; Mertens 2009: 166). These two distinct phases of data collection were utilised to obtain a more complete picture of the research terrain, in that the results from the one method were used to inform the processes of the other (Creswell 2003: 16; Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998: 46). A sample of Life Orientation teachers and how they were distributed across a number of variables including age, religious or spiritual orientation, qualifications, courses completed in religion in undergraduate/postgraduate studies, attendance at INSET and feelings of preparedness for including religions in Life Orientation, comprised the unit of analysis. An overview of each phase is presented in the ensuing sections.

(i) The cross-sectional survey

The survey questionnaire designed for this study aimed to establish the extent to which teachers were prepared to include Religion education as a focus area of Citizenship education in Life Orientation. The influence of INSET, therefore, on teachers' views on including content on diverse religions and beliefs in the classroom context was a key area of interest in terms of designing the questionnaire. Fourteen closed- and open-ended questions were formulated in the survey to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data (4.3.1).

The responses to the survey questionnaire were analysed before the commencement of the PAR phase. Information obtained from the survey was used to design the interview guides for the focus group interviews/discussions which guided the PAR phase (*cf.* Chapter 5).

Sample selection for the cross-sectional survey

To obtain a sample for the cross-sectional survey, purposive sampling was used as a form of non-probability sampling. The sample selection was based on the cases being typical of the category of interest to the research (De Vaus 1996: 78). In this study an official list of secondary schools in Gauteng was used as a sampling frame. Sixty schools were selected to participate in the survey from thirteen of the fifteen districts in the Gauteng Province (*cf*. 4.3.2).

Data analysis of the survey questionnaire

The quantitative data obtained from the survey questionnaire were subjected to a uni-variate analysis to determine the frequencies in responses and therefore the patterns or themes that would emerge in relation to the independent variables and the dependent variable. Descriptive statistics were used mainly to represent the findings from the questions in the survey that required quantitative analysis. The details of this analytic procedure are provided in Chapter 4.6.2 and 4.6.3.

The qualitative data obtained from the responses to the open-ended questionnaires were also analysed for frequencies. The open-ended responses were subjected to:

- Thematic content analysis to determine key themes in the responses pertaining to the variables in the survey (Denscombe 2007: 308); as well as
- Discourse analysis, to determine the terms of reference, words and images in common use by teachers in relation to democracy, citizenship and diversity, and the meanings assigned to them (4.6.3.2) (Taylor 2001: 7; Denscombe 2007: 308; Punch 2009: 198).

(ii) Participatory action research (PAR)

The PAR phase was conducted with three teachers based in a small town approximately 45km west of Johannesburg. PAR was deemed essential as a strategy of inquiry because in the light of the transformative goals associated with the research, I needed to proceed collaboratively with the participants to consider how practice for Citizenship education/Religion education could be transformed (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000: 226). PAR as collaboration resonates with the democratic ideals associated with this study in relation to how the content knowledge that teachers require for Citizenship education/Religion education should be investigated (1.8.5). The PAR phase was blended with elements of ethnography since the research required that I, as the researcher, spend time with the participants to experience their contexts or settings directly (Creswell 2003: 9). PAR provided the research stance (Cochran-Smith 2004: 21) required to collaborate with the participants, while the ethnographic approach justified the observation of the participants as they engaged in a community of practice over a period of time (6.4). The data collection methods usually associated with ethnography were implemented, viz. focus group interviews, participant observation and one-to-one semi-structured interviews (*cf*. Reason & Bradbury 2006: xxiv; Fetterman 1998: 20).

Since PAR is concerned with “change”, this phase was designed according to six cyclical stages of planning for action, reflection on practice, observation, reflection and further planning (Denscombe 2007: 57; Kemmis & McTaggart 2000: 596; Cohen *et al* 2000: 226, 236) to determine the nature of “change” in relation to the teachers’ positions on religious diversity (Cochran-Smith 2004: 70). The

detailed PAR plan of action as it was initially anticipated is presented in Chapter 4.4.2 and the actual PAR stages as they occurred in Chapter 6.4.

Sample selection in the PAR phase

Creswell (2003: 220) maintains that purposeful sampling is used in qualitative data collection so that individuals can be selected because they have the experience of the unit of analysis. This study required the participants to be practising secondary school Life Orientation teachers at the time the study was conducted. The three participants were volunteers organised in one of the Gauteng districts by the subject advisor. Six teachers volunteered originally, but three only joined the project and participated throughout the entire PAR phase. The details of the sampling have been recorded in Chapter 4.4.3.

Data collection methods in the PAR phase

The PAR phase was designed to initiate a face-to-face inquiry group (a community of practice) *with* the participants. The data collection methods are presented in outline in this section and more extensively in Chapter 4.4.4.

- Focus group interviews/discussions were the main method of data collection in this study (Stewart & Shamdasani 1990; Jamieson & Williams 2003; Denscombe 2007: 177; Mertens 2009: 251). Since the activities of the PAR phase were designed to demonstrate the workings of a community of practice, “talk” would need to be central as a data collection method. Focus groups would provide the locus in which mutual engagement and critical reflection and dialogue, the elements of communicative learning, would fuse in the community of practice (*cf.* 3.4.4.3). Focus group interviews/discussions were conducted in Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the PAR phase.

- Participant observation characterised the entire PAR phase and contributed towards the ethnographic element of this study (Fetterman 1998: 31; Denscombe 2007: 217). The participants were observed informally in their school environments, in discussion in the focus group interviews (6.4.1.3) and more formally in their classrooms. Classroom observation was the main source of data collection in PAR Stage 5 (6.4.6).

- Semi-structured one-to-one interviews were conducted in PAR Stage 6 with each of the participants, either at school or at home (Kvale 1996: 1; Fetterman 1998: 37; Fontana & Frey 2000: 645). These interviews provided the participants with the opportunity to reflect on what had been gained from participation in the PAR phase as a whole (6.4.7).

Data analysis in the PAR phase

Given the extensive data sets obtained as a result of the mixed methods design, a global analysis (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit 2004: 109; Flick 2006: 315) of the data was conducted to identify the thematic range across the data (*cf.* Flick 2006: 315), viz. from the survey questionnaire, across into the PAR stages. The thematic range was determined by subjecting all of the qualitative data to thematic content analysis (4.6.3.1).

More specifically, in relation to the PAR qualitative data, three techniques were used to analyse the data, viz. thematic content analysis, discourse analysis and narrative analysis. Each is explained briefly at this point, with the details being provided in Chapter 4.7.

- Thematic content analysis was implemented as a data analysis technique to analyse the contents of the qualitative data obtained from the survey questionnaire and the PAR phase (*cf*. Van Zyl 2007b). The label “theme” is attached to recurring elements, patterns or categories in the data (Denscombe 2007: 236; Dey 1993: 95ff; Flick 2006: 309). The themes arising from the survey questionnaire were investigated in more depth in the qualitative data obtained from the PAR phase.

- Discourse analysis was used with thematic content analysis and narrative analysis. Over and above the frequencies of terms, words or expressions used by participants evident in the data, discourse analysis engages the researcher in looking *inter alia* more closely at language use (Taylor 2001: 6), the meanings assigned to words or terms by participants (ibid: 6) and the language used in relation to the broader social-political context (ibid: 7, 9) (Denscombe 2007: 308; Punch 2009: 198). Knowing how, or at least anticipating how participants use language in relation to the Citizenship education/Religion education domain of interest, would influence how teacher-learning is guided in the community of practice.

- Narrative analysis was used as a data analysis technique in this study, since the data obtained from the focus group interviews/discussions yielded numerous “narrativised” or “storied accounts” (Punch 2009: 190; Riessman 1993: 3). The participants tended to organise their responses into stories or commentary which could not be fragmented during the analysis process for fear of losing the point that the respondent was attempting to make (Clandinin & Connelly 2000: 132). The narrative accounts identified in the data were subjected to thematic content analysis and/or discourse analysis to determine the key ideas that the respondents were attempting to convey in their narrativised responses (Gubrium & Holstein 2009: 42; Clandinin & Connelly 2000: 131) (*cf.* 4.6.3.3; 6.3, 6.4.2.3 PAR Stage 2).

1.12 ETHICS IN THIS RESEARCH

Ethical clearance for the study was obtained from the Department of Curriculum Studies research committee, Stellenbosch University, when the proposal for this research was assessed and approved in April 2006.

Prior to the commencement of the empirical research, ethical clearance was also sought from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct research in a sample of secondary schools in Gauteng (Appendix Ia, Ib). An official letter was thereafter received from the Department of Education granting permission to perform the study (Appendix Ic). Two covering letters explaining the purpose of the survey were included in a pack with the survey questionnaire that was distributed to schools (Appendix II). The first of the letters was addressed to the principals of the schools in the sample (Appendix IIa), and the second, addressed to Life Orientation teachers explaining the purpose of the survey, was attached to the survey questionnaire (Appendix IIb).

In PAR Stage 1 a letter in which the purpose of the project was outlined was presented to the participating teachers. The letter also included a consent form which the teachers were requested to sign, thereby agreeing to participate in the research (Appendix III). The consent form guaranteed that the teachers' anonymity would be maintained throughout the project and in any publications that would result from the research.

1.13 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

In **Chapter 1** an overview of the scope of the study was presented. The background to the study, the problem as it has been demarcated for the study, the aims and research questions as well as the theoretical and conceptual framework have been presented in outline in the chapter. The remaining chapters provide the details of the research framework.

Chapter Two provides a review of literature on teacher professional development for curriculum reform. Trends pertaining to teacher professional development programmes and what such programmes ought to include are identified in the literature on teacher development in general. These trends are reviewed in the light of contributing to teacher development programmes for curriculum reform. These are critiqued in the light of Citizenship education/Religion education Furthermore, the chapter highlights the specific challenges for teacher development in the South African context against a backdrop of social and political transformation. The chapter advances an option for teacher development for Citizenship education/Religion education in the form of teacher-learning communities, and communities of practice in particular.

Chapter Three presents the theoretical framework that underlies this study. Transformative learning theory (Mezirow 1991) and communities of practice theory (Wenger 1998, 2006b; *cf.* Lave & Wenger 1991) are explored for their applicability in defining and contributing towards a locus for teacher development for Citizenship education/Religion education. The chapter presents a critique of both transformative learning theory and communities of practice theory for teacher development for democratic Citizenship education.

Chapter 4 provides the rationale for the empirical study. A detailed account of the overall mixed methods research design is presented in relation to the two phases of the empirical study, viz. a cross-sectional survey (quantitative) followed by PAR (qualitative). The strategy of inquiry is explained as are the data collection methods and the procedures and techniques for the data analysis and interpretation.

Chapter 5 presents the results of the quantitative phase of the study. The analysis, reduction and interpretation of the data obtained from the cross-sectional survey have been presented. The chapter proposes key findings of this first phase of the empirical study. The main issues are identified as these pertain to the PAR phase of the study (Chapter 6). The chapter begins to advance recommendations for further study, which are presented in Chapter 7.

Chapter 6 provides a detailed analysis of the PAR or qualitative phase of the study. This phase of the study was significantly informed by the findings in the survey questionnaire. Hence the chapter shows how the PAR phase attempted to address those findings. An analysis of the data collection methods, in relation to the PAR cyclical stages, is presented. The participants' engagement in a community of practice in a spiral of planning, action, observation and reflection from a PAR perspective dominates the chapter. Findings in relation to the PAR phase are presented and discussed in relation to the research questions.

Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation by presenting an overview of the study and the researcher's reflections on the project as a whole. Key findings pertaining to the knowledge that teachers of Citizenship education require are presented. The limitations of the study are identified and discussed and recommendations for further research on teacher development for Citizenship education/Religion education and diversity are proposed.

CHAPTER 2

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION: A CRITICAL REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the first chapter, teacher professional development for the complexities associated with Citizenship education/Religion education was problematised against a background of curriculum reform as a result of the social and political transformation in South Africa after 1994. A conceptual framework was outlined germane to developing a values-explicit, maximal interpretation of Citizenship education (1.9.2). In the light of this interpretation of Citizenship education, this chapter provides a critical review of approaches to teacher development to highlight the shortcomings of INSET programmes for Life Orientation in general, and Citizenship education/Religion education more specifically, for curriculum reform in South Africa.

The chapter is structured as follows:

- A review of perspectives on teacher development is presented which provides the background for understanding the shortcomings of INSET initiatives for Life Orientation generally and Citizenship education/Religion education specifically.
- A critique of the shortcomings in teacher development programmes pertaining to teachers acquiring the professional knowledge base for Citizenship education/Religion education specifically is presented;
- An option for teacher development in the form of professional learning communities is advanced as being more conducive to teacher-learning for the knowledge, skills and values required for Citizenship education/Religion education.

2.2 TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TEACHING FOR DIVERSITY

The literature on teacher professional development indicates a wide range of research activity associated with both initial teacher education and teacher development (*cf.* 1.8.1) as rapid change occurs in a technological and globalising world. Consequently, much of the interest in teacher development has focused on curriculum reform as a response to change, and hence on what development programmes should include (Evans 2002; Fullan 1993, 2002; Hoban 2002; Shulman & Shulman 2004; Bransford, Darling-Hammond & LePage 2005: 1). Changes in educational policies challenge providers of both teacher education and teacher development programmes to

rethink the professional knowledge base that teachers require relating to their disciplines (1.3) (Howard & Aleman 2008; Adler 2002: 3; Shulman 1999). The literature also abounds with research activity on the perceived elements or dimensions of teacher development (viz. in-service) (Evans 2002: 131), but as Hoban (2002: 3) argues, the literature presents a fragmented, inconsistent and incoherent theoretical framework to guide the continuous or long-term learning of teachers through the processes of educational change. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify elements in the literature that various researchers in the field of teacher development regard as being fundamental to assisting teachers to cope with curriculum development in relation to change. These elements are as follows:

(i) Teacher development is a process rather than a product (*cf.* Evans 2002: 125) and should involve teachers in developing norms, habits and techniques for continuous or lifelong learning (Fullan 1993: 4; Hoban 2002: 17). Fullan (2002) and Evans (2002: 126) suggest that teacher development ought to involve teachers in the practice of continuous inquiry since teachers are the agents who will stimulate their learners for lifelong learning (*cf.* Sokol & Cranton 1998: 1).

(ii) Teacher development should include expanding the knowledge base necessary to enhance teacher capacity to perform effectively in relation to curriculum reform (Howard & Aleman 2008: 158; Robertson 2008; Bransford *et al* 2005: 10, 11; Shulman & Shulman 2004; Banks *et al* 2005). Expanding the knowledge base includes teachers acquiring knowledge of new and different topics as well as different approaches for teaching and learning (Bransford *et al* 2005: 11; Adler 2002: 5). Fullan (1993: 4) has argued that mastery of subject knowledge is a “crucial ingredient of change and a means for achieving deeper expertise” (ibid: 4).

(iii) Curriculum reform also requires from teachers an “epistemological shift” (Adler 2002: 3) in terms of the kinds of knowledge they require to perform effectively in a changing world. Thus, teacher development should enable teachers to make the shift by increasing not only subject knowledge, but also awareness of the kind of knowledge they require for effective practice in relation to educational change (Howard & Aleman 2008: 159; Shulman 1999).

(iv) To be effective, teacher development should take place in professional learning communities (Westheimer 2008: 758). Fullan (2002: 18) maintains that there is a “ceiling effect” as to how much people can learn on their own. Teacher-learning in professional communities allows teachers to engage in joint construction of knowledge through professional dialogue (Fullan 2002: 18; Westheimer 2008: 757) and “other forms of collaborative analysis and interpretation” (Cochran-Smith 2004: 15) (*cf.* (v) below).

The reason I have isolated these particular points as fundamental to teacher development is to critique INSET programmes for teacher development for Life Orientation. A common problem, which researchers in South Africa (Southwood 2000; Ranko-Ramaili 2003) and in other countries, such as the USA and Canada (Cochran-Smith 2004; Hoban 2002; Fullan 1993) have pointed out in relation to teacher development programmes, is the tendency of such programmes to be transmission-oriented rather than participatory. Such programmes aim at 'training' teachers to cope with a new curriculum in technical or mechanistic ways in once-off, large-scale sessions with little or no follow-up (Fullan 1993; Hoban 2002: 5; Westheimer 2008: 756). At this point, however, some points of critique need to be made in relation to the four observations above (i-iv) concerning teacher development and curriculum reform.

2.2.1 Teacher development for pluralism and democracy

In pluralist democracies world wide, a common motivation for interest in curriculum reform is the increasing awareness of ethnic, cultural, language and religious diversity in nation-states (Howard & Aleman 2008: 158; Hemson 2006; Banks 2004: 289; *cf.* Bakker & Heimbrock 2007: 7; Bertram-Troost *et al* 2008: 13), a reality that has been the main influence behind this study. Two more significant areas of concern are therefore essential for teacher development programmes to be effective and relevant for education in a pluralist democracy:

(v) Teacher development initiatives must engage teachers in interactions that lead to the affirmation of diversity (Nieto 2000, 2006; Banks 2002; Gay 2002). For this reason, teachers need to learn about the diverse backgrounds of their learners in order to avoid "spurious assumptions and stereotypes" (Nieto 2000: 5; *cf.* Banks *et al* 2005). Banks (1997: 127) suggests that teachers need to develop a "sophisticated" understanding of the diverse groups to which their learners belong. Affirming diversity in schools, in relation to the curriculum and in broader society, means learning to confront diversity through negotiation and collaboration with the purpose of learning tolerance as a democratic value (Nieto 2000: 350). Nieto (ibid: 347) maintains that teachers need to work together, as well as with their learners and their families, to develop approaches in the classroom that affirm the diversity of one other. This implies taking into account the particular social context in which they work as well as the life-worlds of their students (ibid: 350). "Spurious assumptions and stereotypes" (ibid: 5) could be a cause of the "ceiling effect" in teacher-learning referred to by Fullan (2002: 18; *cf.* (iv) above). By extension, teachers may need to *deconstruct* negative assumptions and stereotypes to counter the "ceiling effect" before effective collaboration for diversity can occur. This resonates with Roux's (2007a: 472) argument in relation to teaching and learning pertaining to religion and religious diversity, that the teacher "must be able to interpret, construct, deconstruct and reconstruct in order to create new contents from old contents and make them understandable" (ibid).

(vi) Teachers should learn the essential principles associated with democratic education and education for democracy (Gutmann 1987, 1993). Teachers need to learn the knowledge, skills and values that embody the ideals of Citizenship education in an open, moral and just society (Banks 2004: 292). Fullan (2002: 17) suggests that encouraging the development of highly motivated and engaged learners requires "mobilising the energy and capacity of teachers" in this regard (*cf.* Howard & Aleman 2008).

With reference to the two points above (v and vi), I am in agreement with educationalists such as Cochran-Smith (2004), Banks (1997, 2004; *cf.* Banks *et al*: 2005) and Nieto (2000), who argue that while it is essential that teachers acquire a sound knowledge base and skills for learning and teaching, these are not sufficient to be effective in the classroom in a pluralist society. Both teacher education and teacher development must incorporate a multicultural philosophy that enables them to learn to see reality from a variety of perspectives and drives them to confront possible biases (Nieto 2000: 5). Likewise, Howard & Aleman (2008: 158) point out that teachers need to develop a "critical consciousness" about issues such as ethnicity, racism, language, religion, beliefs and culture, as an essential component of what they refer to as "teacher capacity" to facilitate learning and teaching for diversity (*cf.* Banks 1997, 2002; Banks *et al* 2005). Le Roux & Möller (2002: 185) also aptly point out that the way in which teachers deal with diversity in the classroom will serve as an example emulated by their learners. Hence teachers need to learn multicultural content to work effectively with diversity in their classes.

These particular elements of teacher development (v and vi) are considered significant for this research and will be developed at a later stage in this chapter in relation to teacher-learning for diversity in professional communities. Before this happens however, it is relevant to note that the nature and scope of curriculum reform will be shaped by the social, political and economic needs of nation-states as has been the case in the USA, western and eastern Europe, and South Africa since the early 1990s (*cf.* Banks 2004: 289; Weisse 2007: 9; Jackson 2007: 27; Jansen 1999a; Chisholm 2005; *cf.* Roux 1998, 1999).

The challenges for teacher development associated with changes related to curriculum reform in South Africa will be reviewed in the next section.

2.2.2 Curriculum reform in South Africa and the challenges for teacher development

Given South Africa's history of segregation and discrimination, a major concern associated with curriculum reform in South Africa involves both the disposition and the ability of teachers to acknowledge diversity and accordingly address the nature of the reforms in teaching for diversity in school contexts (Hemson 2006; Keet & Carrim 2006; Lewin, Samuel & Sayed 2003; *cf*. Slattery 2006: 144). In a research report entitled *Teacher education and the challenge of diversity in South*

Africa, Hemson (2006: 3) suggests that there is very little published research on programmes designed to enable pre-service teachers to address diversity and diversity-related issues in schools in South Africa. Furthermore, in relation to initial teacher education programmes in universities in South Africa, Hemson (2006: v) and Lewin *et al* (2003) have questioned how effective institutions of teacher education have been in preparing their students for the multifacetedness of diversity in schools. Hemson and Lewin *et al*'s observations concerning initial teacher education and diversity, however, refer mainly to diversity in terms of race and anti-racist teaching practices, culture, language, disability, socio-economic status and gender. Religion is often left off the list of diversities in schools, or religion is subsumed under "culture". In addition, the questions which Hemson, Lewin *et al* and a host of other teacher educationalists (*cf.* Howard & Aleman 2008; Banks *et al* 2005; Le Roux & Möller 2002) raise concerning the extent and efficacy of courses on teaching for diversity relate to initial teacher education, as if the challenges associated with diversity are not a concern of veteran or more experienced teachers as well (*cf.* Hemson 2006; Le Roux & Möller 2002).

This is not to say however, that diversity is not investigated at all in all universities in South Africa (*cf.* Ferguson 1999, 2006; Roux & Du Preez 2006; Roux, Du Preez & Ferguson 2009; Waghid 2004, 2009). Roux (2007b), Ferguson (1999, 2006) and Roux and Du Preez (2006) for example, have focused specifically on Religion education in pre-service teacher education courses at their respective universities. These researcher-lecturers have worked extensively with students on developing positive attitudes towards learning content on diverse religions and beliefs and continuously investigate their students' propensity to mediate teaching and learning for diversity in the classroom (Roux 1999, 2006, 2007b; Ferguson 2006; Roux, Du Preez & Ferguson 2009: 74). Furthermore, in a SANPAD-funded[11] collaborative study initiated by Roux (Stellenbosch University, 2005-2008) with various researchers from four different universities in South Africa, the extent of teachers' knowledge (pre-service and in-service) concerning the question of diverse religions and beliefs was investigated in relation to their understanding of human rights and values and interreligious and intercultural dialogue. The findings of this particular study highlighted the importance of intervention programmes to improve teachers' content knowledge on diversity as well as their ability to effectively infuse teaching and learning on human rights in the classroom (Roux, Smith *et al* 2009: 52; Du Preez 2008; Du Preez & Roux 2008).

An argument advanced from the present study is that the same questions asked of initial teacher education programmes regarding teacher preparation for diversity must also be asked of teacher development programmes (*cf.* Du Preez 2008; Du Preez & Roux 2008), the reason being that

[11] SANPAD is the acronym for *South African Netherlands Project on Alternative Developments.* The project was entitled: "Understanding human rights through different belief systems: intercultural and interreligious dialogue". The research was conducted in collaboration with a partner from Utrecht University, Netherlands, Professor dr. C. Bakker; *cf*. Roux, Smith, Ferguson, Du Preez, Small & Jarvis 2009, Final Research Report.

transformation in the political, social and educational spheres, along with the introduction of new policies, has placed enormous demands on established teachers ahead of pre-service teachers (*cf.* Parker 2003; Mattson & Harley 2003). It is my contention that the demands associated with role changes for teachers in relation to the "policy images" of the "ideal teacher" (Jansen 2001: 242) are more imminent for practising teachers than they are for pre-service teachers. Banks (1997: 107) maintains that teachers are human beings who bring their cultural perspectives, values, hopes and dreams to the classroom, as well as their prejudices, stereotypes and misconceptions. Hence, teachers will act on their beliefs, value commitments and personal backgrounds as they select and communicate knowledge to their learners (*cf.* Jansen 2001: 243; Kerr 2002: 21; Schihalejev 2009: 44; Ter Avest, Bakker & Van der Want 2009: 112). On these grounds, one could argue that teachers cannot be expected to teach content successfully and to work effectively with learners from diverse ethnic, cultural or religious backgrounds without being professionally prepared to do so (*cf.* Banks *et al* 2005: 243; Gay 2002: 106; Le Roux & Möller 2002: 185). Being knowledgeable is the first and utmost minimum condition for effective learning and teaching. There is therefore a need to focus on how teachers acquire and create knowledge about diversity in a spirit of continuous inquiry (*cf.* Slattery 2006: 4; Banks *et al* 2005: 244; Wenger 1998: 214; Cochran-Smith 2004: 15).

In addition to the challenges associated with preparing teachers for diversity in the classroom in general, a further area of challenge for teachers and teacher educators in South Africa has involved a radical restructuring of the national curriculum. The introduction of the learning area/ subject Life Orientation requires an expansion of the professional knowledge base of teachers to include explicit subject knowledge of religions, beliefs, worldviews and cultures (DoE 2003b: 9; Chidester 2002b; *cf.* Banks *et al* 2005: 243). Moreover, the challenge that this learning area/ subject presents for teachers of Life Orientation entails bringing the study of religions and religious diversity "into conversation" (Chidester 2002b: 1) with Citizenship education. The restructuring of the national curriculum and the challenge that managing the "conversation" between religious diversity and democratic Citizenship education presents for teachers as individuals and for their professional development will be reviewed in the next section.

2.2.3 Curriculum reform, Citizenship education and teacher-knowledge

As was pointed out in the previous section (2.2.2), the dearth of research on developing knowledge, skills and a disposition for teaching for diversity is evident not only in relation to initial teacher education, but also in relation to established teachers for whom political change and curriculum reform have presented considerable challenges (Parker 2003; Mattson & Harley 2003; Du Preez 2008). Social transformation is a key theme underpinning the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (DoE 2003a) as a whole and it is carried through very specifically in Life Orientation. Citizenship education is the focus area through which learners are to develop the

capacity to be responsible citizens in a pluralist, democratic South Africa (*cf.* 1.8.3; 1.9.2) (DoE 2003a: 11; Waghid 2004: 42). The NCS FET (DoE 2003a) describes the kind of learner envisaged as emerging from the FET band as one who is imbued with "values and acts in the interests of a society based on respect for democracy, equality, human dignity and social justice as promoted in the Constitution" (DoE 2003a: 5). The model of Citizenship education outlined in the NCS Life Orientation (Grades 10-12) (2003a: 11) provides the following picture of the responsible citizen:

> In a transforming and democratic society, personal and individual needs have to be placed in a social context to encourage acceptance of diversity and to foster commitment to the values and principles espoused in the Constitution. Discrimination on the basis of race, religion, culture, gender, age, ability and language as well as issues of xenophobia are addressed. …It is important for learners to be politically literate…to know and understand democratic processes…Knowledge of diverse religions will contribute to the development of responsible citizenship and social justice.

I contend that the problem for teacher development, in relation to the responsible citizen presented in the quotation above, is associated with the outcomes-based design and language used in the NCS (*cf.* Jansen 1999a; Soudien & Baxen 1997). The quotation above describes the ideal *learner* (my emphasis) and his/her development as a citizen at the end of a school phase, Grade 12. The NCS envisages teachers as being "key contributors to the transformation of education in South Africa" (DoE 2003a: 5) and consequently, one could assume, as the facilitators in their learners' understanding of "democratic processes" (see the passage quoted above, line 6) and acquisition of "political literacy" (see the quotation, line 5) as "responsible citizens" (see the quotation, line 7) which would include learners being knowledgeable about and able to accommodate and manage various facets of diversity (see the quotation, line 4).

In the hierarchy of learning and teaching, therefore, the learners are reliant on the assumed knowledge, values and professional competences of their teachers in order to demonstrate the explicit knowledge, skills and values associated with the ideals of Citizenship education for life in South African society. The above description of the knowledge, skills and values that learners should demonstrate must unquestionably require that teachers have the knowledge base, skills and dispositions to bring learning about diversity into effect (*cf.* Bransford *et al* 2005: 9).

As was noted previously (2.2), curriculum reform requires that teachers review the knowledge they possess relating to their disciplines and the skills they need in order to provide the productive learning experiences for learners from all kinds of backgrounds (Bransford *et al* 2005: 14; Banks *et al* 2005: 255; Adler 2002: 3). Life Orientation is a new construct in the development of the national curriculum in South Africa since 1994 (DoE 2003a; Chisholm 2005). Consequently, the "epistemological shift" (Adler 2002: 3) for teachers of Life Orientation includes coming to terms with a new conceptual framework that is a sophisticated blend of disciplines and subject areas including curriculum and policy reform, developmental psychology, social psychology, democracy, human

rights and values in education, Religion education, Physical education, health and nutrition. The model of Citizenship education outlined in the NCS (DoE 2003a: 11) specifies knowledge about democracy, acceptance of diversity, including diverse religions, beliefs and cultures, as marks of responsible citizenship and social justice (ibid). In addition, knowledge of diverse religions is linked to fostering peaceful co-existence in a multicultural society (ibid: 13). This complex integration of disciplines and value orientations requires teachers to broaden their conceptual knowledge base of the areas germane to understanding Life Orientation as a whole, as well as the particular model of Citizenship education as it is presented in the NCS, more specifically (*cf.* 1.8.3) (Chidester 2002b: 12, 15; Prinsloo 2007: 52).

Over and above the "new" or extended knowledge base that teachers require for teaching and learning Citizenship education/Religion education specifically, they are also required to review their own positions towards inclusivity and diversity, given South Africa's history of segregation and racial and religious discrimination (*cf.* Banks *et al* 2005: 243). Moreover, teachers' knowledge of and disposition towards democratic values such as equality, tolerance, mutuality and reciprocity (Gould 1988: 291, 292), values integral to creating appropriate spaces in which learners learn about democratic processes and participation, need to be confronted and evaluated in relation to diverse religions, beliefs and cultures (Stradling 2009: 20, 21; *cf.* Young 2000: 25; Nussbaum 1997: 73). Knowledge about religions and beliefs is also integral to affirming diversity in a democracy (cf. 1.9.3) (Nieto 2000: 311; *cf.* Griffith 2001: xv; Gutmann 1994: 9; Banks 2001: 5). However, as was discussed in 1.9.2, the liberal, pluralist democratic underpinnings of the Life Orientation curriculum with which such knowledge and values are associated explicitly, may be at odds with the conservative values and customs upheld by many teachers. This may in turn influence what teachers choose to include or exclude in the design of their work schedules (*cf.* Chisholm 2005: 204).

This point is illustrated in the findings of a study conducted by Harley (Mattson & Harley 2003: 286, 287) in primary schools in rural KwaZulu-Natal, in which he found significant disparities between policy requirements and what teachers actually practice (*cf.* Jansen 2001: 242). In interviews conducted with teachers Harley discovered that they believe that policy threatens their deeply entrenched traditions, conservatism, custom and their desire to conform (Mattson & Harley 2003: 289; *cf.* Rooth 2005: 262). A reason for this lies with the liberal and open stance towards ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in policy documents. Jansen (2001: 243) argues that there are clearly mismatches between "policy images"' of the teacher and the beliefs and values intrinsic in their backgrounds. Where difference (in this case political difference) is not easily tolerated, Harley found that teachers tended to avoid conflict rather than generate controversial discussions in which their learners would be encouraged to engage in critical thinking (Mattson & Harley 2003: 288; *cf.* Avery 2002: 122). This reality stands in stark contrast to the ideals of responsible citizenship in a

liberal democracy as espoused in the NCS (DoE 2003a: 11), the *National Policy on Religion and Education* (DoE 2003b) and other policy documents (DoE 2001).

A further example of the teacher's struggle with the liberal underpinnings of policy and diversity is located in a study conducted in 2001 and 2002 by Ferguson & Roux (2004) amongst primary school teachers in various regions in South Africa. The findings of this study indicated that the personal beliefs of teachers were a challenge to the effective inclusion of topics on diverse religions or beliefs in the classroom. A similar finding was reported in Rooth's study conducted in Limpopo Province and in the Western Cape (Rooth 2005: 262). Based on the evidence of studies such as these, it should be noted that conservatism cannot be overlooked as a factor that may inhibit educational progress in a democratic society that espouses equality and inclusivity in the broadest sense in its constitution (*cf. The Constitution of South Africa* 9 (1-4); 15(1)).

To summarise, curriculum reform and development, accompanied by the restructuring of the national curriculum to eradicate social inequalities and injustices, presents significant challenges for how teacher development for Life Orientation with all of its complexities is to be conceptualised. With reference to Citizenship education/Religion education, there may be problems associated with teachers harbouring conflicting conceptions and ideologies about what constitutes citizenship in South Africa. Furthermore, the liberal stance evident in the national curriculum, which requires a broadly inclusive acceptance of diversity, may be in conflict with the teachers' own beliefs and values. The teachers' perspectives on diversity may stand in the way of ensuring that learners attain the knowledge, skills and attitudes associated with the aspirations of the model of Citizenship education in the NCS (2003a). For this reason, I will argue that approaches to teacher development for Life Orientation need to be designed to address the knowledge base of teachers as well as their epistemic positions (Banks *et al* 2005: 243; Enslin *et al* 2001:115ff; *cf.* Slattery 2006: 146; Griffiths 2001: 17) towards learning and teaching democratic Citizenship education. In the next section, a critique is undertaken of the teacher development initiatives for curriculum reform in South Africa.

2.2.4 Teacher development initiatives for curriculum reform: a critique

The complexities associated with Life Orientation, as outlined thus far, have implications for what teacher development should entail. That there is a dearth of published research on teacher development for diversity in both teacher education and teacher development programmes in general is also evident in relation to teacher development for Life Orientation more specifically (1.3) (Christiaans 2006; Van Deventer & Van Niekerk 2008). In this section, teacher development for the complexities of Life Orientation will be reviewed in relation to the available literature on teacher development initiatives in South Africa more broadly. This section resumes an earlier discussion of

the elements that require attention in teacher development initiatives for educational change (*cf.* 2.2).

Parker (2003: 37), for instance, drew attention to various INSET programmes conducted since 1995 to introduce teachers first to Curriculum 2005 (DoE 1997) and thereafter to the RNCS Grades R-9 (DoE 2002) and the NCS Grades 10-12 (DoE 2003a). These INSET programmes were also designed to provide comprehensive retraining for teachers so that they could implement outcomes-based education.

Two areas of critique pertaining to these INSET initiatives seem to prevail in the literature, viz. the inadequate levels of content knowledge presented, and the large-scale workshop approach (Jansen 1999b; Parker 2003). Parker (2003: 37) maintained that while much attention had been given to the teacher education sector to transform apartheid education in South Africa (the particular focus between 1995 and 2000), programmes tended to be fragmented and focused mainly on the structural aspects of Curriculum 2005. Similarly, the focus of INSET programmes conducted between 2005 and 2007 for FET teachers focused on outcomes-based education and the structure of the NCS Grades 10-12 (DoE 2003a, 2008), with very little emphasis on developing content knowledge. This may be because, as Jansen (1999b: 213) suggests, in the OBE classroom the teacher disappears into a "facilitative, background role" while the learners emerge as the "initiators and creators of learning" (ibid). Constructing meaning amongst learners hence takes priority over dispensing information by teachers (ibid). If this is the case, a question that arises is related to whether or not teachers possess the knowledge necessary to ensure that essentialist views of race, ethnicity, religion or belief, and gender, for example, do not prevail in the classroom (Grimmitt 1994).

As far as it has been possible to establish, there appears to be no recently published evidence to indicate that the situation has changed for Life Orientation specifically, and the problem prevails to the present (the time of writing, 2010). It seems that Life Orientation INSET programmes conducted between 2005 and 2007, designed specifically to train Grade 10-12 teachers for the key elements of outcomes-based education and the structure of the NCS (DoE 2003a), did not address the problem of assisting teachers to improve their knowledge and understanding of Life Orientation content knowledge either (*cf.* Orsmond & Gildenhuys 2005). A study conducted by Taylor & Vinjevold (1999; *cf.* Parker 2003) has shown that a major weakness of South African teachers is their lack of basic disciplinary conceptual knowledge and a "poor grasp of their subjects" (Taylor & Vinjevold 1999: 139). Yet INSET programmes for teachers seem not to have been designed to this end, as Taylor & Vinjevold point out (ibid: 161). Only feeble attempts seem to have been made to

rectify the problem through Department of Education-initiated development programmes after 1999.[12]

In addition to Taylor & Vinjevold (1999) and Parker's (2003) comments concerning the poor content knowledge of many teachers in South Africa and my own observations of INSET programmes, the following points of critique have been extracted from the research of two South African researchers on the mode of delivery used in provincial Department of Education INSET programmes between 1995 and 2002. Ranko-Ramaili (2003: iv) initiated an empirical study amongst secondary school teachers in North West Province to investigate the impact of INSET programmes on teacher performance. He found that the once-off, district-determined INSET workshops for teachers had little effect on either teachers' or students' growth. This observation confirmed Southwood's (2000) findings in an earlier study. She concluded that the practice of conducting once-off training sessions, or that to which Hoban (2002: 13) referred as "a one-step linear approach for change", is inadequate to engender the professional development of teachers (including subject or content knowledge).

Both Ranko-Ramaili (2003) and Southwood (2000) were critical of the tendency in South Africa to offer INSET programmes along the lines of the large-scale transmission type session or lecture. However, Fullan (2002: 19) and Hoban (2002: 2), commenting on teacher development in the Canadian context, have also argued against teacher development programmes in the form of the large-scale lecture. Fullan (2002: 19) maintains that this format may be valuable in certain respects, but does not really make a difference to what teachers learn (*cf.* Hoban 2002: 2). Cochran-Smith (2004: 2) argues that teacher-learning must go beyond attempts by educational authorities to implement large-scale programmes by means of which "particular teaching technologies" are transmitted (ibid). She (ibid: 10) adds furthermore, that periodic "staff development" whereby teachers are "congregated into auditoriums to receive the latest information from so-called education experts about the most effective teaching techniques", does not qualify as teacher development. Southwood (2000: 8) too maintains that the culture of teacher professional development in South Africa is based on the belief that knowledge lies in the domain of the experts as if teachers have nothing to offer at all (Yonemura 1982: 239; *cf.* Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1993: 1).

In the same vein, and with particular reference to his study in South Africa, Ranko-Ramaili (2003: 101) is clearly critical of what he referred to as "out of context learning" with support materials

[12] This comment is based on personal experience in my capacity as lecturer and teaching experience tutor in the University of the Witwatersrand School of Education, Johannesburg, South Africa. First, based on observations made of LO teachers during school visits with teacher education students in 2007, 2008 and 2009; and, second on personal experiences of meetings with Department of Education officials in December 2008 and February 2009, in which subject specialists at the WSoE were asked to present short courses in subject content for FET teachers, including Life Orientation.

presented in the form of “ready-made manuals” (ibid: 101) unsuited to the particular school contexts of teachers and learners. Both Ranko-Ramaili (2003) and Southwood (2000) argued that the large-scale approach overloads teachers with large amounts of curriculum information, usually over a short period of time. The result is that the kind of instrumental transmission typical of the approach adopted by presenters of such programmes has little impact on teacher performance (2.2) (Ranko-Ramaili 2003: 102; *cf*. Hoban 2002: 5).

The various points of critique outlined above refer equally to teacher development for Life Orientation. Large-scale INSET sessions, disconnected from teachers’ school contexts are particularly problematic when teachers are required to acquire and understand the complex knowledge base and skills associated with the various focus areas of Life Orientation. The nature of the contents of Citizenship education/Religion education (*cf.* 1.3 and 2.2.2) specifically and the related pedagogical skills require a context for teacher-learning that is more long-term and intensive, a context where teachers examine new concepts and engage critically with the complexities associated with diversity, citizenship and democracy. Moreover, the learning context should also mirror the democratic inclusiveness suggested in the Life Orientation curriculum entry in the NCS (DoE 2003a: 11) (*cf.* Robertson 2008: 28; Westheimer 2008: 759).

Christiaans (2006) discovered that teacher preparation for the implementation of the new curriculum involved teachers in a weeklong programme only. Teachers were exposed to an outcomes-based philosophy and to the various outcomes and assessment criteria in the curriculum, but not to content knowledge. Christiaans’ (2006: 183) research findings included that none of the teachers in her research sample had received training in the contents of Life Orientation and consequently there were major gaps in the teachers’ knowledge base (*cf.* Taylor & Vinjevold 1999). Furthermore, teachers’ knowledge and skills for Life Orientation were not being addressed by the Department of Education, in university courses, or by the teachers themselves. Christiaans found no evidence that INSET programmes had widened and deepened the teachers’ knowledge of Life Orientation in general (ibid: 183).

Rooth’s (2005) massive empirical study regarding the status and practice of Life Orientation conducted in schools in Limpopo province and in the Western Cape (2002-2004) indicated that teachers were not adequately familiar with Citizenship education in the RNCS (2002). With regard to Religion education, teachers tended to associate their schools and hence Life Orientation, with specific religious teachings, Christianity mostly (Rooth 2005: 262). One could conclude from these findings that teachers in the sample did not understand the civic relationship between citizenship education, human rights and religion in Life Orientation. Rooth’s findings indicate moreover that while some Life Orientation teachers argued for an inclusive approach to religion (ibid: 264), for others Religion education remains a contentious issue. Rooth (ibid: 262) supported the idea that

teaching and learning about religions in Life Orientation cannot be avoided given the emphasis on human rights in the Life Orientation curriculum (ibid: 264). Rooth (2005: 264, 266) recommended that extensive training for teachers must be conducted in the Citizenship education focus area of Life Orientation in order that they acquire a holistic picture of Citizenship education and human rights, with Religion education as a core civic matter (*cf.* Chidester 2006, 2008).

Van Deventer and Van Niekerk (2008: 8) investigated the perspectives of Life Orientation teachers in a study conducted during 2007 regarding the implementation of this learning area/subject in selected primary and secondary schools in the Western Cape. This study was particularly concerned with *Physical Development and Movement* in the GET band and the focus area *Recreation and Physical Well-Being* (now known as Physical Education) in the FET band. In spite of the differences in focus in these focus areas in comparison with that of the present study, Van Deventer and Van Niekerk's (2008) research raises an important question regarding Life Orientation as a whole, viz. what it means to be a "qualified" Life Orientation teacher. These researchers found that teachers who lack expertise are often placed in Life Orientation posts. Teaching Life Orientation without being qualified results in teachers feeling stressed as a result of feeling incompetent. In addition, teachers are often shifted in and out of Life Orientation posts before any sense of competence is achieved (Van Deventer & Van Niekerk 2008: 135). In this respect, Van Deventer and Van Niekerk's findings resonate with Rooth's (2005: 235), that specialist Life Orientation teachers are rare in many schools in South Africa, a situation that has serious implications for the future of Life Orientation as a learning area/subject.

Van Deventer and Van Niekerk's argument concerning the professional status of the Life Orientation teacher resonates with Shulman's (1999: 65) position on the "professionalisation of teaching" (1.3) as well as with those elements proposed earlier in the chapter regarding the fundamentals of teacher development (2.2) (points i-iv; v-vi). Collectively, the findings of Southwood (2000), Ranko-Ramaili (2003), Rooth (2005), Christiaans (2006) and Van Deventer and Van Niekerk (2008), against the background of Taylor and Vinjevold's (1999) findings concerning teacher knowledge in general, indicate that INSET programmes for teachers in South Africa have not contributed towards improving the professional status of teachers, the confidence of teachers (*cf.* Graven 2002) or the teachers' knowledge base for effective Life Orientation teaching and learning. On the grounds that Life Orientation is a new learning area/subject, there is little experience of a history of practice to draw from; a reality that strengthens the case for more rigorous intervention with assiduously designed programmes to ensure depth in teacher-learning in this field. Specifically, the Citizenship education focus area in Life Orientation, also a "new" concept in the NCS, requires teachers to reflect critically on their own content knowledge, knowledge of citizenship in pre- and post-apartheid South Africa and their disposition to teaching and learning "for" and "about" religious and cultural diversity. Teaching "for" and "about" diversity includes related issues such as sexual orientation and religion, non-religious worldviews, conceptions of

morality, and ethnicity and religion (*cf.* Slattery 2006: 143; Shulman 1999: 64; Cochran-Smith 2004: 145; Roux 2007a: 471).

Religion education in its own right is a field that requires teachers to have a scholarly knowledge base about diverse religions and beliefs, as well as particular facilitation and mediation skills to manage different or alternative perspectives and explanations of concepts, symbols and values (*cf.* Shulman 1999: 65; Jackson 2004a, b; Roux 2006, 2007b; Chidester 2008: 275). An outline of what teachers need to know for Citizenship education/Religion education, based on the curriculum and other policy documents, was provided in Chapter 1.3. It could be argued that at the very least, teachers of Citizenship education require content knowledge and general pedagogical knowledge, but various educationalists argue that more than this is required. A key question raised by Cochran-Smith (2004: 145) in this regard is related to "what teachers need to know *about* the knowledge base and *what else* they need to know, including attitudes, knowledge and beliefs to teach diverse groups" (cited author's italics) (*cf.* Shulman 1999: 64, 65; Banks *et al* 2005: 243). To address this question concerning the teacher's knowledge base for diversity, Shulman (1999: 65) stresses that the teacher has special responsibilities towards knowing the way in which "truth" is determined in a field, as well as how "truth" is conveyed to learners. In relation to Religion education teaching and learning more specifically, Roux (2007a: 471) argued that teachers' depth of understanding is also dependent on their knowledge of the social constructs that have shaped or influenced the ways in which religious and cultural diversity are perceived by them (*cf.* also Gergen & Gergen 2003: 5; Gergen 2003: 15; Kerr 2002: 21). These perspectives are particularly pertinent to understanding how teachers may eventually approach and facilitate inter-religious and intercultural learning, if at all (Ter Avest & Bakker 2009: 16ff; Roux 2007a: 475; *cf.* Chidester 2002b: 5).

The various shortcomings regarding teacher professional development should be evaluated in relation to the elements of teacher development for curriculum reform identified and outlined earlier (*cf*. 2.2). Points 2.2 (iv)-(vi) in particular are of interest here, viz. that teacher professional development should take place in professional learning communities, that teacher development initiatives should engage teachers in interactions that lead to the affirmation of diversity, and that teachers need to *learn* essential principles and values of and for Citizenship education/Religion education. The curriculum reforms associated with Life Orientation are demanding on teachers' resources, as demonstrated in the argument as it has unfolded thus far. In addition to the knowledge and skills required for effective teaching and learning of the three other focus areas of Life Orientation in the FET (*cf.* 1.3) (DoE 2003a), the social-political influences on the perspectives of teachers towards Citizenship education *per se,* as well as the place of religion in education, require teachers to enter into a different discourse in education. The discourse needs to be a discourse of transformation, one that reflects the ideals of an inclusive, communicative and "maximal" interpretation of Citizenship education (1.9.2 (i)) (McLaughlin 1992: 236; Jackson 2007:

31; *cf.* Roux 2007a). Such an approach is not likely to materialize in INSET programmes without a conscious and concerted effort from specialists in the field.

Against the background sketched thus far, the sections to follow investigate and argue for a context for teacher-learning that is conducive to teachers deepening their content and conceptual knowledge associated with diversity and the relationship between Citizenship education and Religion education (*cf.* 1.3; 1.8.4; 1.8.5).

The next section presents a review of how various educationalists frame learning communities for teacher-learning and development, particularly with regard to how education, democracy and diversity work together. The foundation for one of the key theoretical components to be developed in Chapter 3 is provided, viz. that teacher-learning for diversity preferably occurs in a social context, in communities of practice (*cf*. Lave & Wenger 1991, 2002; Wenger 1998, 2006a, b; Wenger *et al* 2002). The perspectives on learning, diversity and democracy associated with the concepts of learning communities outlined in the review below have bearing on how teacher-learning for Citizenship education/Religion education is envisaged in the present study. A deeper application of the learning communities reviewed below (2.3) for Citizenship education/Religion education will be discussed later in the chapter in relation to communities of practice (2.4).

2.3 FRAMING LEARNING COMMUNITIES

In terms of investigating alternatives to the problem of conceptualising teacher professional development for Citizenship education/Religion education, this section provides a rationale for teacher-learning in professional communities. The stance which I have taken on teacher-learning serves as a critical response to the various shortfalls identified in a previous section of the chapter (2.2) pertaining to INSET programmes for Citizenship education/Religion education in South Africa.

Westheimer (2008: 757) maintains that the goals of teacher-learning within a community of colleagues are shared by various educationalists, but that the specifics of what these communities look like, and how to create and sustain them remains varied. Westheimer (2008: 758) suggests moreover that whatever the vision for learning in communities, that vision will become the “set of lenses” (ibid) through which one can understand communities in practice. Westheimer points out that a problem may exist with how teacher-participants conceptualise “community” (*cf.* Strike 1999). This is an important observation for defining the nature of teacher collaboration and exchange within a professional community. Suffice it to say at this point that the community metaphor draws attention to the norms and beliefs of “practice” as social participation, a sense of collegiality, problem-solving in relation to “practice” and possibilities for mutual support among participants (Westheimer 2008: 757; *cf.* Wenger 1998: 74) (2.4). A critical examination of “community” within communities of practice (*cf.* Jewson 2007: 68) is presented in Chapter 3.4.4.

In the next chapter, Wenger's (1998, 2006b; Wenger *et al* 2002) conceptualisation of learning in a community of practice will be examined in more detail for its applicability to formulating a learning context for teachers of Citizenship education/Religion education. Before that takes place, a review of the literature concerning the purpose of learning communities for teacher development specifically is undertaken in the ensuing sections. The literature abounds with theorising and empirical research on teacher-learning in communities (Hoban 2002; Cochran-Smith 2004; Zellermayer & Munthe 2007; Westheimer 2008), but three broad perspectives seem to prevail. Each of these provides compelling reasons for ongoing teacher development in communities.

2.3.1 Communities of inquiry: teacher-learning for the extension of the professional knowledge base

The attention that learning communities receive in the literature, and the rigour with which researchers argue in favour of on-going teacher development in this way, clearly indicates that such approaches are not always implemented by educational authorities to support teachers in coping with the process of educational change (Hoban 2002: 36). This situation is an area of contention not only in South Africa, but as noted previously in this chapter, in other countries as well (cf. 2.2) (Southwood 2000; Ranko-Ramaili 2003; Hoban 2002; Shulman & Shulman 2004; Cochran-Smith 2004; Westheimer 2008).

Advocates for teacher-learning in communities focus on the processes of learning for the development of professional knowledge (*cf.* Gorodetsky 2007: 7). Westheimer (2008: 757) uses the term "teacher-learning communities" to designate a group of teachers engaged in professional endeavours together. Hence, the purpose of a teacher-learning community is for teachers to create a culture of intellectual inquiry amongst themselves at particular schools, or amongst a number of schools in close proximity to one another (ibid). This is how learning becomes continuous, practice-based, social and collaborative as suggested by Zellermayer & Munthe (2007: 1) (*cf.* 2.2). Zellermayer and Munthe's work (ibid: 2) with teachers in communities focuses on "how learning in a community strengthens teachers' sense of agency, inter-subjectivity, accountability and ownership of the classroom learning environment". In this regard, Westheimer (2008: 760) suggests that one way of framing a teacher-learning community would be to focus on creating a culture of "intellectual inquiry" where teachers "examine new conceptions of teaching and learning, reflective practice, collegiality, shared values" and generally engage in professional dialogue (ibid). Hence a significant characteristic of a successful teacher-learning community lies in teachers regarding one another as resources for ongoing study and support in improving their professional knowledge base (Westheimer 2008: 759; Cochran-Smith 2004: 66; Fullan 2002: 19). The various components for the professionalisation of teaching as defined by Shulman (1999: 61ff) and alluded to in Chapter 1.3 and in 2.2 (i) – (iii), would be more successfully realised in this framing of a

teacher-learning community (Shulman & Shulman 2004; Westheimer 2008; Hoban 2002; Zellermayer & Munthe 2007).

2.3.2 Communities of inquiry: teacher-learning for democratic understanding and participation

In the literature on teacher-learning communities, it appears that the weight of the research and related discussions has to do with developing professional collegiality amongst teachers and with extending content knowledge (*cf.* 2.3.1). Westheimer (2008: 766) takes the argument further than this and proposes that participation in a learning community ought to develop teachers' capacity to engage in the workings of a democratic society. Hence, in addition to being a locus for intellectual inquiry (ibid: 756), the teacher-learning community essentially becomes a locus for deliberation and debate, skills indispensable to the participation of citizens in a democratic society. The learning community framed from this perspective investigates how members succeed in learning and understanding human differences, how they manage conflict and tensions that difference invokes, and how to ensure the "full participation of members with a diversity of backgrounds and interests" (ibid: 774).

In the light of Westheimer's perspective, two of the elements identified earlier on in the chapter (2.2, v-vi) as being essential elements of teacher development, viz. that teachers' understanding of diversity should be broadened, and that learning in communities enables teachers to acquire the knowledge, skills and values that embody the ideals of education for democracy, are reiterated here (*cf.* 1.9.2). Schooling that reinforces democratic notions of community must create the conditions in which teachers can cultivate the capacity for critical reflection on democratic culture. For this ideal to be realised, the appropriate conditions for teacher-learning need to be created, in which deliberation and debate become the norm for participation and communication amongst teachers (*cf.* Gutmann 1987: 49, 1996: 157).

Westheimer's (2008) proposal for teacher-learning in communities is concerned with learning the ties between education, democracy and community in schools. The concept of democracy upon which learning communities ought to be based, therefore, should go beyond the idea of democracy as fair and collective decision-making to include an understanding of democracy which attaches significant value to "participation, civic friendship, inclusiveness and solidarity" (Strike 1999: 60; Westheimer 2008: 767; Waghid 2009). Furthermore, the discussions that occur in the community must allow for disagreements and controversial issues (*cf*. 1.9.3) (Westheimer 2008: 768). This means that in creating communities of intellectual inquiry, teachers need to become familiar and comfortable with dealing with open conflict, critical reflection and the expression of multiple viewpoints (Westheimer 2008: 761; Nussbaum 2002: 293; Nieto 2000: 339; *cf.* Barnes 2009). This perspective will be returned to and developed in relation to creating a community of practice for

Citizenship education/Religion education in which citizenship, diversity and inclusivity are investigated theoretically in relation to practice in Chapter 3.3 and 3.6 and empirically in Chapter 6.

2.3.3 Communities of inquiry: teacher-learning for diversity and social justice.

In this third broad perspective on teacher-learning communities in the literature, I refer mainly to the work of Cochran-Smith (2004) who draws on critical theory, especially as conceptualised by Paolo Freire (Cochran-Smith 2004: xvii, 18) and the literature of multicultural education (ibid: 65) to formulate her view on teacher development in learning communities. It is useful to mention these philosophical influences since they associate teacher-learning communities more directly with teaching *for* diversity, not merely *about* diversity, from a social justice perspective (see (iii) below) (Cochran-Smith 2004: 62).

Cochran-Smith (2004: 12, 66) positions teacher education and teacher development directly in the context of communities of learners. She uses the term “inquiry communities” (ibid: 12) to refer to teams of teachers who collaborate to co-construct subject knowledge, the curriculum, and information about the social, cultural, economic and ethnic backgrounds of learners. Cochran-Smith’s (2004) views on teacher-learning communities resonate with Westheimer’s communities of intellectual inquiry and the views of other educationalists who emphasise the extension of the professional knowledge base as the main activity in professional learning communities (Shulman & Shulman 2004; Hoban 2002: 39). However, what makes Cochran-Smith’s approach different from that of other educationalists is the following:

(i) Teacher education and teacher development must be viewed from a multicultural perspective. Cochran-Smith (2004: 4, 64) advocates that teachers need to adopt a “multicultural discourse” for teaching and learning in order to construct pedagogical strategies that reflect equality and inclusion. The value of every individual’s or group’s ethnic, cultural and religious identity should be recognised (*cf.* 1.8.7) (Cochran-Smith 2004: 4, 64). Adopting a multicultural perspective, or “pluralist stance” (ibid: 70), means that teachers work at constructing a curriculum that is inclusive of varying perspectives and worldviews. In co-constructing knowledge about the racial, ethnic, cultural and language backgrounds of their learners *with* learners, teachers foster a shared sense of responsibility for diversity in their schools (*cf.* Nieto 2000: 139). Hence, learning in inquiry communities enables teachers to engage in a joint construction of knowledge pertaining to local conditions. In this sense, teachers learn to identify particular instances of inequity, prejudice, oversight or non-recognition of social groups (*cf.* Young 2000: 105; Taylor 1994: 105ff), through research, conversation and reflection (see (ii) below) (Cochran-Smith 2004: 11).

Moreover, inquiry communities allow teachers opportunities to examine their own personal knowledge and experience in relation to diversity. This could mean that teachers work together to identify and reconsider tacit assumptions about the religious, cultural and ethnic identities of their learners that are often the cause of prejudice or non-recognition or for setting up "rigid inside-outside distinctions amongst groups" as Young (1997: 387), puts it (*cf.* Cochran-Smith 2004: 96).

(ii) Every person who participates in an inquiry community is both a learner *and* researcher (Cochran-Smith 2004: 13; Afdal 2007: 93). Teachers are researchers when they collaborate with colleagues to investigate and construct problems of practice together, problems associated with inequalities to do with race, ethnicity, culture and language that may persist in the school context or education system. As learners, teachers learn from the evidence gathered from investigation, wrestle with multiple perspectives on problematic issues, consider alternative approaches to addressing those problems and open up their strategies to critique and revision (Cochran-Smith 2004: 111). With regard to the teacher as learner and researcher, Cochran-Smith and Lytle adopted the phrase "inquiry as stance" (cited in Cochran-Smith 2004: 14, 111) to describe the position that teachers and others who work together in inquiry communities ought to adopt towards knowledge and its relationship to practice.

This metaphor, "inquiry as stance", as it is used by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (Cochran-Smith 2004: 14), was adopted from the discourse of qualitative research. The term "stance" is used to make visible the various perspectives through which researchers frame their questions, observations and interpretations in the research process. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (ibid) thus use "inquiry as stance" to describe the position that teachers, who work together in inquiry communities should take toward knowledge and its relationship to practice (ibid: 14) (*cf.* Chapter 4 and Chapter 6). The term is hence used to capture the "frame of mind" (ibid: 14) that teachers need to adopt, "across the life span" in relation to changing social, historical, cultural and political contexts and experiences (ibid: 14) (*cf.* 2.2 (i), *teacher development for lifelong learning*).

(iii) Teaching learning in inquiry communities includes learning to teach for social justice and democracy. Social justice pedagogy prevails in Cochran-Smith's work and is linked to the notions of pluralism and inclusivity mentioned in (i) and (ii) above (Cochran-Smith 2004: 21; *cf.* Banks 2004). Teaching for social justice and democracy means that teachers construct pedagogies that are inclusive of difference and that recognise the backgrounds and opinions of all learners in discussions and in the processes of learning (Cochran-Smith 2004: 4, 64; Nieto 2000: 46; *cf.* Young 2000: 61). Teaching for social justice,

> therefore, requires that teachers adopt approaches in the classroom that directly challenge structural inequalities related to race, culture, religion, language and ethnicity (Cochran-Smith 2004: 64; *cf.* Nieto 2000: 315, 2006: 472).

The synopsis of Cochran-Smith's perspective on teacher development presented above provides the reasons that she rejects large-scale transmission-oriented approaches to teacher development (Cochran-Smith 2004: 69). In her view, learning to teach for social justice requires taking the local context into consideration and situating learning in relation to the needs and interests of learners. Knowledge is co-constructed with other teachers and learners to acknowledge what learners bring to school with them, their needs, interests and cultural and linguistic resources (Cochran-Smith 2004: 69; *cf.* Nieto 2000: 139).

Both Westheimer's (2008) and Cochran-Smith's (2004) perspectives on teacher development begin to set the scene for teacher development for democratic Citizenship education. The principles for learning in communities, as these are sketched by both educationalists, are seen to enhance the concepts of both "community" and "practice" for a Citizenship education/Religion education community of practice, as will be shown in Chapter 3.4.

2.4 TEACHER-LEARNING IN COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

The concept "communities of practice" is most commonly associated with Lave & Wenger (1991) and Wenger's (1998, 2006a, 2006b) development of this concept (Fuller 2007: 21). Wenger's development of the concept as being embedded in "a social theory of learning" (Wenger 2006b: 12) is developed in more depth in Chapter 3.3. Suffice it to say at this point that while there are attractive features in Cochran-Smith's (2004) communities of inquiry concept, Westheimer's (2008) teacher-learning communities, and other similar concepts (Zellermayer & Munthe 2007), I argue that Wenger's concept of communities of practice provides a more acute theoretical framework for conceptualising teacher-learning communities. However, teaching for social justice is not explicitly addressed by Wenger (1998, 2006a, 2006b), but is intrinsic to the democratic principle of inclusivity in Cochran-Smith's (2004: 12) framing of "communities of inquiry" and the notion of the democratic community as propagated by Westheimer (2008: 266). This is not to say, however, that a democratic approach is not alluded to in Wenger's concept of communities of practice. Wenger's (1998, 2006a) terminology includes "community", "negotiation", "sharing" and "mutuality" for example. As pointed out in Chapter 1.7, the theory of communities of practice is developed in this study in relation to critical multicultural education (Nieto 2000; Banks 1997, 2004; *cf.* Nussbaum 1997) and political philosophy (McLaughlin 1992; Taylor 1994; Bohman 1996; Gutmann 1987, 1994, 1996; Young 1997, 2000), because of the emphasis that these place on diversity and on teaching for social justice (*cf.* Nieto 2000, 2006).

2.4.1 Communities of practice in the literature

Lave & Wenger (1991) and Wenger's (1998, 2006a, 2006b; Wenger *et al* 2002) concept of communities of practice is being used more and more as a tool to analyse learning or to frame the activities of learning communities. Areas of application and extension in the literature on the concept of communities of practice are related to:

(i) The use of communities of practice for knowledge management in large-scale organisations (Hughes, Jewson & Unwin 2007: 2; Roberts 2006: 634; Wenger 1998: 18, 45ff). Communities of practice have become a favoured knowledge management strategy, whereby skills development and knowledge transfer take place (Van Eeden 2004: ii). Van Eeden (ibid: 4), for example, explores the role that communities of practice could play as part of a National Skills Development Strategy. Van Eeden (ibid: 74) shows that a communities-of-practice approach provides organisations with a learning and knowledge management strategy, and facilitates the development of skills, both in and out of the workplace (ibid: 5).

(ii) Learning in communities of practice has been drawn upon extensively to describe and explain student- and teacher-learning in the field of mathematics education (Graven 2002, 2004: 178; Graven & Lerman 2003: 185). Graven (2002: 1) investigated mathematics teachers learning through participation in an INSET programme. A primary assumption that informs Graven's research is that teacher-learning would be enhanced by stimulating participation within a community of practice where members would provide mutual support for one another's learning to teach mathematics (Graven 2004: 181). A key finding in Graven's research is that "confidence" is both a product and a process of mathematics teachers' learning (ibid: 179). In Graven's findings "confidence" is conceptualised as an additional component of learning; that is, in addition to Wenger's other four components of learning, viz. "meaning", "practice", "identity" and "community" (*cf.* Wenger 1998: 5).

Since Graven's (2002) research was conducted, further developments have taken place in the education system in South Africa with the introduction of the FET band (DoE 2003a). The present study consequently focuses on teacher development in relation to the introduction of a pluralist conception of Citizenship education and the related challenges associated with teacher-learning for the FET band (DoE 2003a: 11).

(iii) A more recent application of the communities of practice concept is in research methodology. Martyn Denscombe (2008) uses the communities of practice concept as the basis for investigating mixed methods research, as there are variations and inconsistencies in mixed methods research that he believes need to be clarified (ibid:

270). Denscombe (ibid) maintains that collaboration by researchers in a community of practice is useful for understanding the methodological choices made by those performing mixed methods research and for correcting and/or accommodating variations and inconsistencies in that paradigm. In addition, Denscombe (ibid: 280) suggests that communities of practice are also consistent with pragmatism (*cf.* 4.2.2), the philosophical worldview usually associated with mixed methods research. This common philosophical thread between mixed methods research and communities of practice is linked to the way that both of these operate. Denscombe suggests that neither of the two tie methodological choices to metaphysical principles of epistemology and ontology only, but "allow methods to be chosen in terms of their practical value for dealing with a specific research problem" (ibid: 280).

(iv) Also in the context of research, a team of researchers in the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit (WRERU) in England drew on the community of practice concept to organise and reflect on their research activities (Ipgrave, Jackson & O' Grady (eds.) 2009). The focus of this research was on the role of religion in education in a diverse society (Ipgrave 2009: 14). The intention behind the community of practice was that these Religious education practitioner-researchers would share particular applications of the interpretive approach to Religious education in relation to a model of action research (Ipgrave 2009: 14; Jackson 2009: 21; O' Grady 2009: 32). The sharing, reflections and discussions in face-to-face workshops and via email contributed to the engagement dimension of this community of practice (Ipgrave 2009: 16) (*cf.* 3.4.4.3).

2.4.2 Mixed methods, communities of practice and the present study

In the present study, the relationship between mixed methods research and communities of practice has not been formulated in the way described by Denscombe. Communities of practice are investigated for their potential as loci for knowledge acquisition (Denscombe 2008: 276) in relation to democracy, citizenship and religious and cultural diversity, not for knowledge acquisition or debate associated with a research paradigm. The mixed methods approach developed for this study is associated with an epistemological stance, in that survey research and participatory action research have been combined in a pragmatist-constructivist research paradigm (4.2.2). The nature of the work conducted in the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit (WRERU) in which Religion education is an aspect of the domain of interest in the community of practice concept, with action research contributing to the research methodology, resembles my own approach. However, my approach is different in the sense that the community of practice is investigated as an option for teacher-learning and hence for the development of Citizenship education/Religion education.

2.5 SUMMARY AND REFLECTIONS ON THE CHAPTER

The purpose of this chapter was to position a critique of teacher professional development for Citizenship education/Religion education within a broader perspective of teacher development initiatives for social and political change. To this end, a review of the literature has been presented pertaining to teacher development for curriculum reform, which emphasises some of the limitations of Department of Education-initiated INSET programmes (2.2.2; 2.2.3). The discussion of the trends in or perspectives on teacher development for change described above suggest the possibility of establishing professional learning communities as a way of facilitating the improvement of the knowledge base of teachers for Citizenship education/Religion education specifically.

The various perspectives on teacher-learning communities outlined in 2.3 clearly indicate that teacher development in learning communities is not a new idea. The different ways of framing learning communities indicate differences in the visions the authors have for the professional development of teachers. In some cases, the different conceptions of teacher-learning communities tend towards the generic regarding what teachers need to learn in relation to curriculum reform (*cf.* Zellermayer & Munthe 2007). In other cases, communities are conceptualised as providing the spaces for teachers to learn to teach in and for democracy (*cf.* Westheimer 2008) and for social justice (Cochran-Smith 2004). The various framings, taken together, are valuable in terms of contributing key elements for teacher-learning in professional communities (*cf.* Shulman & Shulman 2004), including the principles and concepts of citizenship, democracy and diversity (*cf.* Cochran-Smith 2004; Westheimer 2008). These framings remain inadequate, however, for providing a rationale for developing the professional knowledge base and a sense of “practice”, for Citizenship education/Religion education with all of its complexities.

The synopsis of key ideas and concepts pertaining to professional learning communities presented in this chapter nevertheless provides the foundations for a concept of communities of practice for Citizenship education/Religion education to be developed in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

TEACHER DEVELOPMENT FOR CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION/ RELIGION EDUCATION: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Central to this study is the proposition that effective teacher-learning for Citizenship education/ Religion education is more likely to occur through participation in professional learning communities than in large-scale transmission-oriented learning contexts (2.2.4). In Chapter 2.3 and 2.4 different perspectives on professional learning communities were presented, in which different advocates of such learning communities emphasise different aspects of teacher development. All of the various perspectives (Westheimer 2008; Zellermayer & Munthe 2007; Cochran-Smith 2004; Wenger 1998; Wenger *et al* 2002) contribute to conceptualising alternatives for teacher-learning in some way or other. These framings, however, seem not to have taken the argument far enough to accommodate the experiences and disposition of the teacher towards teaching for diversity and for developing a notion of "practice" for Citizenship education/Religion education specifically.

The theoretical framework for this study, therefore, has been formulated to address both the issue of teacher-learning for a Citizenship education/Religion education domain of interest as well as to attempt to understand how the personal histories or frames of reference of teachers may influence their learning "the habits of democratic citizenry" (Avery 2002: 122) (1.9.1; 1.9.2). To this end I have drawn on two learning theories that serve as the theoretical pillars for this study:

- Transformative learning theory, mainly as postulated by Jack Mezirow[13] (3.2); and
- Social learning theory operationalised as communities of practice, as conceptualised mainly by Wenger[14] (1998, 2006b) (*cf.* 2.4; 3.3).

Transformative learning theory provides some insight into what development, or transformative thinking means in adulthood - how adults make sense of their worlds and how they learn about democracy and diversity. Transformative learning theory also explains the relationship between learning and autonomous, responsible thinking which Mezirow regards as the central goal of adult education (Mezirow 1997: 5; Merriam 2004: 6). For this reason transformative learning theory has

[13] Transformative learning theory and transformative learning: Mezirow (1991, 2003), Mezirow & Associates (2000); Mezirow, Taylor & Associates (2009).
[14] Communities of Practice: Lave & Wenger (1991, 1999, 2002); Wenger (1998, Wenger 2006a, 2006b); Wenger, McDermott & Snyder (2002); *cf.* Hughes, Jewson & Unwin (eds.) (2007).

been drawn upon to understand how teachers (as adult learners) position themselves in relation to citizenship, democracy and diversity in the context of their practice (Mezirow 1991, 2000, 2009). Mezirow (1991: 207) posits that learning the principles of democracy ideally occurs in discursive communities in which the principles of communicative learning are fostered, viz. critical reflection and Deep Dialogue (3.2.3.4 (ii), 3.2.3.5).

Community of practice theory is also primarily concerned with learning, but through participation in relation to a shared domain of interest (3.4.4.1) (*cf.* Lave & Wenger 1991: 14; Wenger 1998, 2006a, 2006b).

In this study the communities of practice concept is theorised as a "discursive community" (Mezirow 1991: 198, 207) providing the locus for fostering teacher-learning and a sense of "practice" for Citizenship education/Religion education (*cf*. 2.2). The community of practice concept is hence posited as a locus for maximising the principles of transformative learning to add depth to the internal dimensions of a community of practice. A key idea that links Wenger's community of practice theory with transformative learning theory is located in how learning is understood, viz. not merely as the acquisition of information, but as a "changing experience of participation" (Wenger 2006b: 2; Mezirow 1991: 1). Central to understanding learning in Mezirow's theory (1991: 70) is the idea that learning must in itself be transformative.

This chapter is structured as follows:

- A conceptual analysis of transformative learning theory is presented.
- The rudiments of transformative learning theory are explained.
- The tools for fostering communicative learning are outlined viz. critical reflection and Deep-Dialogue
- Mezirow's conception of discursive communities for providing the optimal conditions for transformative learning is presented.
- A critique of the elements of transformative learning where these will be strengthened in communities of practice is presented.
- A conceptual analysis of the dimensions of community of practice theory is presented as an option for ongoing teacher-learning and development for Citizenship education/ Religion Education.
- A critical review follows of the community of practice concept.
- The chapter concludes with a summary and reflections on the theoretical components.

3.1.1 Definitions of the terms used in the chapter:

(i) Adult

In this study an 'adult learner' is a professional teacher over the age of twenty-two years. Twenty-two is more or less the age in the South African context when a person qualifies with a first professional degree. An 'adult learner' is a learner who has life experience beyond the FET band and some form of professional teacher education (*cf.* Biographical details, Survey Questionnaire, 4.3).

(ii) Development and growth in adulthood

Merriam (2004: 60) points out that 'development' in adult learning theory is always presented as positive and growth oriented. 'Development' in adulthood according to Mezirow (1991: 161) is associated with perspective transformation. William Perry (1999: 49) uses the term "growth" to refer to "progress in development" (1999: 48). When "growth" is applied in social contexts it also conjures up assumptions about values (ibid: 49). Hence "growth" becomes a moral issue, in that development is assumed to be development of values and responsibility. In this study, "progress in development" or "growth" is aligned to Mezirow's view that transformative learning leads developmentally towards "a more inclusive, differentiated, permeable and integrated perspective" in adulthood (Mezirow 1991: 198, 2009: 22; *cf.* Merriam 2004: 61).

3.1.2 Scope of the study

Given the extensive treatment in the literature of adult learning theory, it is not within the scope of this study to define adult learning theory in its entirety. Rather, I contend that when the principles of transformative learning theory (Mezirow 1991; Mezirow & Associates 2000; Mezirow, Taylor & Associates 2009) are applied to INSET programmes where citizenship, diversity and democracy are key issues, the shortcomings of such programmes are highlighted and hence their ineffectiveness for teacher development. The literature on teacher development seems to indicate that adult learning and adult education are fields separate from teacher professional development. However, as the ensuing discussion will show, these two fields should not be seen as mutually exclusive. Approaches to teacher professional development will clearly benefit from knowledge of the nature of the adult learner provided by adult learning theory (Brookfield 1995, 2005; Merriam & Caffarella 1991, Merriam 2004; Jarvis 1987; Brown 2004).

3.2 TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING THEORY: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

3.2.1 Introduction to transformative learning theory and transformative learning

Jack Mezirow and Associates' (1991, 2000, 2009) transformative learning theory dominates in this framework, but other adult learning theorists such as Jarvis (1987), Brookfield (1995, 2005), Brown (2004) and Merriam (2004) have also contributed to this analysis. I have drawn upon

transformative learning theory in this study to inform approaches to teacher professional development for learning and teaching Citizenship education/Religion education for two reasons:

(i) to focus on how teachers, as adult learners, have come to know what they know and the basis or source of the assumptions that underlie their beliefs and values (Mezirow 1991: 1; *cf.* Jarvis 1987: 57; Brown 2004: 83);
(ii) to make sense of how the beliefs of teachers (e.g. religious, scientific, humanist, atheist, agnostic, traditionalist) influence their perspectives on diversity and their own continuous learning about citizenship and diversity for classroom practice.

The relationship between the frame of reference of the teacher and its influence on the acquisition of a professional knowledge base required for learning and teaching Citizenship education/ Religion education is hence foremost in this discussion. It must be noted that since Mezirow's introduction of the concept of transformative learning theory, the theory has "grown, been elaborated upon, challenged" (Cranton & Roy 2003: 87) and reconceptualised in adult education. Given the context of the application of transformative learning theory in this study, transformative learning theory within a rational, cognitive framework (Mezirow 1991; Cranton & Roy 2003) has been most influential in defining teacher-learning for citizenship, democracy and diversity.

"Transformative learning theory" and "transformative learning" are sometimes used inter-changeably by Mezirow, but these should be differentiated as follows:

Transformative learning theory attempts to analyse and describe the process of how adults learn to make sense of their frames of reference, viz. meanings behind experiences, what they know and believe, their values and perspectives (Mezirow 1991: 198; Mezirow 2000: 3, 4; Wang & King 2008: 137). According to Mezirow (1991: 44), adults have developed a "frame of reference" or "meaning perspective" for understanding the world. These are usually taken-for-granted and people do not give much thought to the values, assumptions and beliefs that are absorbed into their frame of reference (*cf.* Cranton & King 2003: 32). Transformative learning theory seeks to explain the process behind how adults formulate more dependable beliefs about their experiences and become more critically aware of their own tacit assumptions and the assumptions of others (Mezirow 2000: 4; *cf*. Jarvis 1987: 37ff).

Transformative learning is described by Mezirow (2003: 58; *cf.* Taylor 2009: 3) as a "uniquely adult form of meta-cognitive reasoning". The goals of transformative learning are associated with transforming frames of reference to make them more "inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective and emotionally able to change" (Mezirow 1991: 167, 2003: 58; *cf.* Nussbaum 2002: 293). Frames of reference that are more inclusive, open and reflective are needed not only to guide the democratic

process, but also to contribute to a reasonable, morally responsible, compassionate citizenry (Nussbaum 2002: 293; Young 2000: 24). However, as Mezirow (2000: 7) and other educators of adults have argued, adults need to be helped "to learn how to anticipate and resolve the tensions of democracy" (Brookfield 2005: 1130; Banks 1997:1), particularly since the multiple perspectives and experiences evident among citizens in a pluralist society are likely to challenge taken-for-granted frames of reference (*cf.* Garfinkel 2003: 12).

3.2.2 The appeal of transformative learning theory for this study

Transformative learning's appeal is associated with its propagation of learning as the creation of "new categories, openness to new information" (Mezirow 2000: 7) and a heightened consciousness of multiple perspectives and experiences in adulthood. As will be discussed in more detail in a later section (3.2.3.4 (ii)), transformative learning propagates critical self-reflection as the means to recognising that previously held views by which people have accounted for the world may no longer be valid in a society that has moved on to valorise human difference and freedom (Brookfield 2005: 1131; Gergen 2003: 15) (*cf. The Bill of Rights* in the *Constitution of SA* 1996 (15)). Transformative learning engages adults in "mindful learning" (Mezirow 1991: 114, 2000: 7) in which they become aware of their own thinking or their own views in relation to human difference (*cf.* Brown 2004: 80; Merriam 2004: 61; Cranton & King 2003: 32). This latter point resonates with Nussbaum's (1997) perspective on learning about cultures or religions different from one's own. Nussbaum (1997: 73, 2002: 293ff) contends that it is necessary in democratic education to increase self-awareness of what it means to be in one's own culture, to be a person of one's own gender, race, class, ethnicity and religion as well as to understand how these categories affect those who are different from oneself. A goal of transformative learning is to expand adults' ability to think critically and with an open mind about contemporary issues that stem from the gender, race, class, ethnic and religious differences that pervade society (ibid) (*cf.* Gergen & Gergen 2003: 34; Slattery 2006: 71). The appeal of transformative learning theory for this study, therefore, is its potential to explain how teachers confront teaching and learning for and about "otherness" (Westheimer 2008: 766) (*cf.* 2.2.3), how teachers think through the tensions associated with knowing about "the other" (Griffiths 2001: 18; Gutmann 1993; Ter Avest 2007: 197; *cf.* Weisse 2009a: 7) and why such tensions within their own thinking exist at all.

It should be noted that transformative learning theory, as conceptualised by Mezirow, is embedded in Habermas' theory of communicative competence (Mezirow 1991: 96; Brookfield 2005). It is not within the scope of this study to analyse Habermas' theoretical perspectives on communicative action or deliberative democracy, since the focus is on how these concepts have been taken up in Mezirow's transformative learning theory. However, Mezirow's position on adult learning is more meaningful when one knows that his perspective is indebted to Habermas' perspective on adult learning for democracy (*cf.* Mezirow 1991: 64ff, 2009: 20; Brookfield 2005). This positioning by

Mezirow locates his theory within a domain that recognises the importance of developing within adults "the critical reasoning necessary for democracy to function" (Mezirow 1991: 208; Brookfield 2005: 1130). Moreover, transformative learning theory is Mezirow's critique of adult learning theory (Mezirow 1991: 4). He believes that adult learning theories have failed to recognise the central roles played by an individual's acquired frame of reference, through which meaning is construed and all learning takes place (*cf.* Jarvis 1987: 57). Transformation theory explains the way adults construe experience, the dynamics involved in modifying meanings associated with beliefs, values and cultural norms, and the way meaning structures undergo changes when these are found to be dysfunctional or no longer relevant (Mezirow 1991: 5, 1994: 223).

This brief introduction to transformation theory and transformative learning has implications for teacher development for democracy, citizenship and diversity. Transformative learning is viewed as being integral to enabling teachers to meet the demands associated with inter-religious and inter-cultural learning and the tensions associated with diversity (*cf.* Weisse 2009a: 8, 9, 2009b: 9). This transformative perspective on learning is particularly relevant to the present South African context in which political and social transformation put an end to oppressive authority structures and led to the establishment of a constitutional democracy that recognises diversity. The impact of social and political transformation on education draws teachers and their capacity for learning diversity into the spotlight. Mezirow's perspectives on meaning making, critical reflection and dialogue are necessary tools for teacher development for diversity and are also integral to defining the activities of a community of practice associated with developing in teachers the social deftness to participate in democratic discourse (Brookfield 2005: 1132ff; *cf.* Wenger 1998: 74) (*cf.* 3.4.4.1).

This outline draws attention to the rudiments of transformation theory, viz. "meaning structures", "meaning schemes", "meaning perspectives" and critical reflection on the nature of our assumptions. These concepts will be explained in the section to follow, after which the relationship of these concepts to transformative learning will be discussed more extensively.

3.2.3 Rudiments of transformative learning theory

3.2.3.1 Meaning structures, meaning schemes and meaning perspectives

Transformative learning theory seeks to explain how the meaning structures that adults acquire over a lifetime become transformed. Meaning structures are inclusive of meaning schemes and meaning perspectives. Meaning perspectives are frames of reference based on the totality of an individual's cultural and contextual experiences (Mezirow 1991: 4, 1994: 223; Jarvis 1987: 57; Brown 2004: 84; Wang & King 2008: 138). Frames of reference are the lenses through which people perceive, comprehend and interpret the world, or are what other theorists have referred to as paradigms (Kuhn 2003: 8; *cf.* Gergen & Gergen 2003: 2), a conceptual framework, or a worldview (Mezirow 1991: 46, 2000: 16; Merriam 2004: 61; Cranton & Roy 2003: 88). An

individual's beliefs, values, culture and traditions contribute towards his/her frame of reference, which selectively orders what a person learns and the way in which he/she learns it (Gergen 2003: 15).

Frames of reference comprise sets of taken-for-granted assumptions or habits of mind (Mezirow 2000: 17) that provide one with the criteria for making moral and aesthetic judgements, viz. how and what we judge to be "right or wrong, bad or good, beautiful or ugly, true or false, appropriate and inappropriate" (Mezirow 1991: 44). Habits of mind also include one's concept of personhood or idealised self-image (ibid: 44; Mezirow 2000: 17; *cf.* Jarvis 1987: 58; Gergen & Gergen 2003: 2, 3). Frames of reference contain a number of meaning schemes.

Meaning schemes are "points of view" or the concrete manifestations of a person's habits of mind in a frame of reference (Mezirow 1991: 44, 1994: 223; Cranton & Roy 2003: 88). An example whereby the differences and relationships between frames of reference (meaning perspectives) and points of view (meaning schemes) can be understood is as follows. Ethnocentrism may be central to a frame of reference, giving rise to certain habits of mind such as negative racial and religious stereotypes. These negative stereotypes are outwardly expressed as points of view shaped by the frame of reference. Consequently this ethnocentric frame of reference may be the reason why a person shuns or discriminates against someone from a different religious or ethnic group or life stance ("the other"). A further example of a frame of reference particularly relevant to this study is belief. The frame of reference could be religious, humanist, a-religious, non-religious, atheist, patriarchal, traditional, nationalist (*inter alia*). These frames of reference could manifest in displays of tolerance or intolerance, examples being altruism, compassion and hospitality, or xenophobia and homophobia, depending on a person's habits of mind or points of view acquired through socialisation (*cf.* Gergen & Gergen 2003: 3).

Mezirow (1991: 44) suggests that meaning schemes (points of view) are more likely to be examined and transformed through critical reflection (*cf.* 3.2.3.4 (ii)) than meaning perspectives (frames of reference), since the latter are more entrenched in one's thinking. The goals of transformative learning, however, are associated more particularly with critical self-reflection on the taken-for-granted assumptions that comprise one's frame of reference, because the transformation would be far more meaningful. This point is clarified more specifically in relation to learning in the next section.

3.2.3.2 Learning: learning as meaning making and transformative learning

The term 'learning' takes on particular meaning in Mezirow's conceptualisation of transformative learning. As noted in an earlier section (3.2.1), "learning" in Mezirow's view is a form of meta-cognitive reasoning (Mezirow 2003: 58). Hence it is not associated merely with the acquisition of a

body of knowledge. “Learning” in the context of transformation theory should lead to changes in behaviour, attitudes and thinking, as Wang and King (2008: 136) contend, and involves the learner in the process of engaging in critical reflection “to change taken-for-granted assumptions” in a frame of reference according to Mezirow (2000: 7, 2009: 23).

Mezirow (2000: 30) and other advocates of transformative learning (*cf.* Daloz 2000: 104; Cranton & Roy 2003: 87; Cranton & King 2003: 34; Wang & King 2008: 138) argue for learning not only “mindfully” (cf. 3.2.2), but also “meaningfully” which entails learners engaging in a “dialectical” or dialogical “process of interpretation” of one’s frame of reference (Mezirow 2000: 30). This dialogical process encourages learners to draw their habits of mind into conscious awareness and allows them to examine critically what they believe and value in their lives and in their work (*cf.* Nussbaum 2002: 293). Some form of action, however, must follow. Mezirow uses the term “action” in the sense of making a decision, making an association, revising a point of view, reframing or solving a problematic experience, modifying an attitude, or producing a change in behaviour (Mezirow 1991: 152; Mezirow 2000: 30; Taylor 2009: 9). Learning may therefore entail knowing why we accept or resist learning about some or other group, perspective or issue.

Two types of learning, as Mezirow defines them will be discussed, since these are integral to understanding the processes that enable transformative learning, viz. instrumental learning and communicative learning.

3.2.3.3 Instrumental and Communicative learning

A key proposition of transformative learning theory, as Mezirow conceptualises it, recognises Habermas’ distinction between instrumental and communicative learning (Mezirow 1991: 64, 2000: 8, 2003: 59, 2009: 20). This distinction suggests that there are “two major domains of learning with different purposes, logics of inquiry, criteria of rationality and modes of validating beliefs” (Mezirow 2000: 8; *cf.* Brookfield 2005: 1165). Transformative learning includes both kinds of learning, provided they embrace a third kind of learning which Habermas called “emancipatory” (Mezirow 1991: 87; Cranton & Roy 2003: 89). “Emancipatory” knowledge is knowledge gained through critical self-reflection, not from the need to acquire “technical” knowledge of a subject or knowledge field (Mezirow 1991: 87). This study is concerned mainly with communicative learning and its potential for teachers acquiring emancipatory knowledge, viz. the kind of knowledge that “is gained through a process of critically questioning ourselves and the social systems within which we live” (Cranton & Roy 2003: 89). The distinction between instrumental and communicative learning needs to be made to draw attention to the role of communicative learning for creating possibilities for opening up how people think in relation to religious and cultural diversity, embedded in what Mezirow (2000) referred to as “philosophical habits of mind” (Cranton & Roy 2003: 88).

Instrumental learning engages learners in controlling and manipulating the environment in the sense that cause-effect relationships and learning are determined through task-oriented problem solving through empirical or objective measurement (Mezirow 1991:72, 2003:59). Understanding in instrumental learning engages one in hypothetical-deductive reasoning. The form of knowing associated with instrumental learning is associated with analysing objects and events into dependent and independent variables and identifying the relationship between them (Mezirow 1991: 75). Whilst there is a place for instrumental learning, Mezirow (2000: 8; *cf.* Sokol & Cranton 1998: 1, 2) contends that there are limitations to instrumental learning for transformative learning since the former cannot account for differences in opinion, beliefs, traditions, values and moral decision-making. Hence the need for communicative learning.

Communicative learning, as the term suggests, involves the learner actively and purposefully learning to understand the beliefs, intentions, values and ideals of others as he/she communicates dialogically with them. Mezirow (1991:75, 2000: 8, 2009: 20) contends that the most significant learning in adulthood falls into the communicative category, because it involves one in learning to comprehend, describe and explain perspectives, one's own and the perspectives of others (*cf.* Nussbaum 2002: 294). Comprehension in communicative learning results from one's assessing the meanings behind the language one uses, viz. words or expressions, the meanings behind questions of "truth", or the authenticity of assertions of truthfulness made by the person or persons with whom one is communicating (Mezirow 2000: 9).

Problem-solving in the communicative context involves analogic-abductive logic or inference, rather than the hypothetical-deductive logic of instrumental learning (Mezirow 2000: 9). Abductive reasoning in communicative learning is concerned with participants engaging in testing the validity of competing claims (knowledge, beliefs or ideologies) with the purpose of reaching some form of consensus. Abduction ought to lead to the revision of pre-conceptions, assumptions or beliefs as these have been shaped by one's frame of reference or meaning perspective (Mezirow 1991: 83, 85; *cf.* Afdal 2007: 94). In this sense, communicative learning becomes emancipatory (Mezirow 1991: 87; Cranton & Roy 2003: 89).

In Mezirow's view, there are three ways in which people are inclined to validate or justify beliefs from within a frame of reference. One way is to turn to authority figures, such as religious leaders. A second way is to turn to force (as in Nazi Germany or apartheid South Africa). A third way, and in Mezirow's view, the only acceptable way, is to invalidate the problematic belief dialogically and with appropriate democratic action (Mezirow 1991: 64, 1994: 225). Hence, the term "critical-dialectical" reasoning as it is used by Mezirow (2003: 58) implies that social interaction in the form of communicative action, rational discourse or dialogue is integral to transformative learning (Mezirow 1994: 225). For the remainder of this dissertation, the terms "dialogue" or "Deep Dialogue", a term

introduced by Swidler (2004: 767), will be used for “critical-dialectical discourse” for its succinctness, but with the meanings associated with “critical-dialectical discourse” and “Deep Dialogue” derived from Mezirow (1991, 2003) and Swidler (2004: 769) respectively (*cf.* 3.2.3.4 (iii)).

It is important to note that “problematic” beliefs are not necessarily conflicting beliefs, points of view or truth claims but, as Mezirow (2009: 20) suggests, may include abstract concepts such as ‘democracy’, ‘citizenship’ or ‘social justice’ that learners find difficult to conceptualise. Communicative learning engages learners dialogically in closer analysis and interpretation of such problematic concepts in the light of their own beliefs, perspectives, practices and ideologies, as well as the beliefs and perspectives of others (Mezirow 1991: 85). Communicative learning hence becomes the means for enabling “shifts in the frame of reference” (Daloz 2000: 104) through dialogue, the medium of critical reflection (Mezirow 1991: 87, 2003: 60; Taylor 2009: 8, 9). Critical reflection and dialogue are given more scope in the section to follow.

3.2.3.4 Core elements of fostering transformative learning

Taylor (2009: 4) names six core elements that frame a transformative approach to teaching and learning in adult education. These are individual experience, critical reflection, dialogue, holistic orientation, awareness of context and authentic relationships. Individual experience, critical reflection and dialogue were amongst the core elements associated with Mezirow’s (1991: 76, 108) seminal work. The other three, holistic orientation, awareness of context and authentic relationships are identified by Taylor (2009: 4) as emerging from the literature related to applications and critical analyses of transformative learning by other researchers (*cf.* Cranton & King 2003; Cranton & Roy 2008; Tisdell & Tolliver 2009).

Taylor (2009: 4) further suggests that these elements have an interdependent relationship. “They are rooted in deeply held assumptions about the nature of adult learning and the purposes of teaching for change” (ibid: 5). These elements should also be viewed in relation to a broader theoretical orientation guiding transformative practice (ibid). For this reason, in this study these elements are seen to enhance the dimensions of communities of practice as a social theory of learning, as analysed and discussed from 3.3 onwards.

The six core elements as Taylor (2009) presents them will be outlined to further the discussion of the rudiments of transformative learning as far as these were deemed relevant to this study (*cf.* 7.3.1.4).

(i) Individual experience

Taylor (2009: 5) maintains that individual experience is the primary medium of transformative learning (*cf.* Wang & King 2008: 138). Individual or prior experiences are what learners bring with

them to the learning context and are the source of stimulation for critical reflection and dialogue. The nature of individual experience was discussed fairly extensively in an earlier section (3.2.3.1) in terms of the individual's frame of reference and habits of mind and is mentioned again to draw attention to it as a core element needed to foster transformative learning.

There are two dimensions to individual experience. First, it consists of what learners bring with them to the learning context, viz. as prior experience, or the taken-for-granted assumptions that underpin the learners' frame of reference (Mezirow 2000: 8; Taylor 2009: 6). Second, experience is what educators or researchers create for learners or participants to foster transformative learning. Of significance are the individual and group experiences that educators create as "catalysts" (Taylor 2009: 6) for critical reflection and dialogue (*cf.* 6.4, PAR Stages).

(ii) Critical reflection

Promoting critical reflection amongst adult learners is integral to fostering transformative learning. Critical reflection is apparently a "distinguishing characteristic of *adult* learning" (my emphasis) and the process whereby learners question "the integrity of deeply held assumptions and beliefs based on prior experience" (Taylor 2009: 7; Mezirow 1991: 108).

The literature abounds with variant perspectives on reflection, reflexivity and critical reflection (Dewey 1933, 1998; Schön 1983, 1987; Brookfield 1995; Moon 1999). Reflection or reflective practice is often associated with teachers rethinking their practice to learn from their experiences, to modify skills to fit specific contexts, and to invent more effective strategies for learning and teaching (Hoban 2002: 62; Larrivee 2000: 294). Critical reflection in the context of transformative learning theory however, means something more than "reflection-on-practice" or "reflection-in-action" (Schön 1983), although this way of interpreting reflection is not excluded from how reflection is defined by Mezirow (*cf.* "Content reflection" and "process reflection" below) and hence for the purposes of this study. Within the context of transformative learning theory, reflection takes on a particular meaning and serves a particular purpose.

Mezirow (1991: 104ff) differentiated between three forms of reflection linked to transformative learning (Mezirow 2000: 21; Cranton & King 2003: 34; Merriam 2004: 62; Taylor 2009:7). These forms of reflection are best understood in relation to the transformation of meaning perspectives or frames of reference (3.2.3.1):

Content reflection entails examination of the content or description of a problematic meaning scheme, or of *what* one perceives, thinks, feels, or needs to be acted upon or changed in a meaning scheme (Cranton & King 2003: 34). Content reflection could follow the hypothetical-deductive process associated with instrumental learning since it involves a review of each stage in

task-oriented problem solving (Mezirow 1991: 101). In communicative learning however, it requires continuous evaluation of beliefs, assumptions and values attained through prior learning against new information or experiences and exposure to different perspectives (ibid: 107).

Process reflection focuses on the process or method of one's problem solving strategies, or thinking *how* to handle an experience (Merriam 2004: 62), or *how* an experience or situation could have been handled (Cranton & King 2003: 35). Process reflection according to Mezirow (1991: 105) entails assessing the adequacy of one's efforts at problem-solving to find dependable ways to solve similar problems in the future.

Premise reflection involves examining long-held socially constructed assumptions, beliefs and values about an experience, political orientation, religious doctrines, cultural or religious biases and moral-ethical norms and values (Merriam 2004: 62; Mezirow 2003: 59). Premise reflection involves an awareness of *why* one perceives, thinks, feels or acts in the way one does and forms the basis for critical self-reflection (Mezirow 1991: 108, 117, 1994: 224; Taylor 2009: 8; *cf.* Nussbaum 2002: 29).

Mezirow (1991: 17, 2003: 60) maintains that it is through content and process reflection that people change their minds, transform, confirm and even negate their meaning schemes (*cf.* Brookfield 1995: 2, 3). Content reflection and process reflection are everyday occurrences and whilst it is likely that these forms of reflection may have some influence on the thinking of learners, it is only through engagement in premise reflection, or "critical self-reflection on assumptions", that frames of reference are transformed (Mezirow 1991: 117; Brookfield 1995: 8). Hence, Mezirow (1994: 224) contends that engagement in critical reflection leads to more significant learning than that provided by content or process reflection, the reason being that premise reflection leads to a frame of reference that is more inclusive and open to other viewpoints (Mezirow 2000: 19; 1991: 111, 117). It is premise reflection that opens the possibility for the transformation that leads to greater autonomy in thinking (Mezirow 2000: 29, 2003: 60; Brookfield 1995: 29; *cf.* Nussbaum 1997, 2002).

In the context of teacher development, Cranton & King (2003) maintain that to help teachers better understand their practice, facilitators of development programmes need to incorporate activities that foster content, process and premise reflection. With regard to teacher development for democratic Citizenship education, content reflection does not merely entail reflection on the factual content of the curriculum. Based on Mezirow's theory (2009: 20), both content reflection and process reflection would include: the evaluation of curriculum content; identifying problematic assumptions that individual teachers or groups of teachers may have of core concepts such as democracy and citizenship; their decision-making regarding "*what* knowledge, interpretive

frameworks, beliefs and attitudes" (Cochran-Smith 2004: 145) should be included in learning and teaching programmes to teach their own school-based learners from diverse backgrounds; and, how they conceptualise appropriate pedagogy for diversity and so on[15]. Process reflection is useful for critically assessing modes of developing a professional knowledge base for teachers as well as for reflection-on-practice (Schön 1987; *cf.* Roux 2007a; Du Preez & Roux 2008) (*cf.* 6.4.2.4 FG2#8).

The purpose of premise reflection or critical reflection is to enable learners to reformulate "reified structures of meaning" by reconstructing the dominant narratives or discourses that gave rise to them in the first place (Mezirow 1991: 116, 2000: 19; Wenger 1998: 73). Such dominant narratives are formulated on various taken-for-granted beliefs, values, cultural norms and ideologies. A goal of transformative learning, therefore, is to allow the habits of mind associated with dominant narratives to be brought into consciousness so that these can be examined critically (Cranton & King 2003: 34; Mezirow 2000: 15; Daloz 2000: 104; Larrivee 2000: 295). When these beliefs are constituents of a religious or cultural worldview or frame of reference, it may happen that learners cling to the original frame of reference, which consequently impedes development from a transformative learning perspective (Mezirow 2000: 8) (*cf.* 1.9.2 (ii)). This point has deep implications for how and what teachers of Citizenship education/Religion education may be prepared to learn or to dismiss from the perspective of their own frames of reference. This possibility is explored in the empirical phase of the study (*cf.* 6.4).

(iii) Dialogue/reflective discourse

As was noted with "reflection", the literature abounds with "dialogue" or "dialogical teaching" as a tool or approach for problem-solving, exploring, thinking, inquiring and reasoning together in a learning context (*cf.* Gravett & Petersen 2009: 100ff; Swidler 2004). In the context of religious education and human rights and values education, dialogue has been explored extensively for its usefulness in generating inter-religious and inter-cultural learning and understanding (*cf.* Ipgrave 2001; Weisse 2003; Jackson 2004a; Ipgrave & McKenna 2007; Du Preez 2008). It is not within the scope of this study to present a detailed account of dialogue as a tool for interreligious and intercultural learning or as a pedagogical tool for democratic education.[16] Rather, dialogue or "reflective discourse" is analysed in this study as a core element integral to communicative learning in the domain of teacher-learning and development. In the context of transformative learning theory, as with critical reflection, "reflective discourse" (Mezirow's term) or dialogue takes on

[15] *cf.* Chapter 1.3, the synopsis of knowledge and skills derived from the NCS FET and the *National Policy on Religion and Education; cf.* Chapter 7.

[16] For detailed accounts of where dialogue itself is the unit of analysis in inter-religious and intercultural learning, human rights education and/or education for democracy *cf.* Du Preez (2008), Weisse (2003) and Ipgrave (2001).

specific meaning, since it becomes the medium for critical reflection in action (Mezirow 2000: 10; Taylor 2009: 9, *cf.* Schön 1987: 44ff).

Mezirow uses the terms “critical-dialectical discourse” (2003: 59) or “reflective discourse” (2000: 10) or “discursive assessment” (2009: 20) to refer to a particular type of dialogue that involves participants in the critical assessment of beliefs, feelings and values. Hence, the type of dialogue envisaged is not a pedestrian type of dialogue involving an exchange of commonsense ideas. Rather, dialogue as a core element of transformative learning (and possibly the reason why Mezirow prefers the terms reflective discourse or critical-dialectical discourse) is devoted to searching for a common understanding between the parties’ “claims to rightness” pertaining to beliefs, values and feelings (Mezirow 2000: 10, 2003: 59). As Cranton & King (2003: 32) suggest, the discourse involves the various participants “opening up” their frames of reference for scrutiny by others. This dialogical process entails learners critically assessing the assumptions underlying their own beliefs, values and ideologies, by advancing reasons, weighing the supporting evidence and arguments and doing the same in order to examine alternative perspectives in others (Mezirow 2003: 59, 2000: 11).

Swidler (2004: 767) refers to this type of dialogue as “Deep Dialogue” which he describes as: “a transformative kind of consciousness that seeks to primarily learn from rather than teach those who think differently from us”. It is useful to draw on Swidler’s conceptualisation of dialogue since he defines it specifically in relation to religious freedom as a human right (ibid: 761) and by extension, in relation to diversity. Swidler (2004: 767) couples “Deep Dialogue” with “Critical Thinking” and maintains that “Deep Dialogue and Critical Thinking” are core human competencies that: “must be developed as the new basic mentality – and consequent practice – on which all education, cradle to the grave, indeed, all thought and action, is built”.

Furthermore, Swidler (2004: 769) advances the idea that the value of engaging in dialogue resides in one’s being able to rise above one’s own limited perceptions and descriptions of the world, learning from others “what they can see from their place in the world that I cannot see from mine” (ibid). In fact Swidler (2004: 770) defines Critical Thinking as the ability to raise “our *un*-conscious *pre*-suppositions to the conscious level” (italics Swidler’s), a contention not too far from Mezirow’s (1991: 198) critical reflection, a core element for fostering transformative learning (Taylor 2009: 4, 7, 9; Daloz 2000: 113).

Mezirow contends that reasoning and argumentation are also integral to communicative learning and therefore to Deep Dialogue and Critical Thinking, which become the conduit for advancing reasons and weighing evidence to support or refute arguments (Mezirow 1991: 67, 2003: 58). Argumentation, according to Mezirow (1991: 68), refers to that “process of dialogue in which

implicit validity claims are made explicit and contested with an effort to criticise and vindicate them". By engaging in critical reflection in dialogue, learners develop the skills, insights and dispositions essential for argumentation and for engaging in self-reflection on one's taken-for-granted frames of reference (3.2.3.1, 3.2.3.2).

(iv) Holistic orientation

For Mezirow (in Dirkx & Mezirow 2006: 124), the role of the rational cognitive process in transformative learning is significant for changing acquired frames of reference to make these more inclusive, discriminating and open, while various other transformative learning theorists emphasise the importance of "holistic orientation" (Taylor 2009: 10; Dirkx in Dirkx & Mezirow 2006: 125). A critique levelled at rational discourse and critical reflection as components to fostering transformative learning is related to the viewpoint that not enough attention is given to "affective and other ways of knowing" (Taylor 2009: 10; Dirkx in Dirkx & Mezirow 2006: 126) in this "rational process of learning" (Mezirow in Dirkx & Mezirow 2006: 124). Holistic approaches to transformative learning focus on affective and relational ways of knowing. These ways of knowing are associated with "developing an awareness of feelings and emotions in the reflective process" (Taylor 2009: 10). Emotional issues to address those dynamics that contribute to resistance in learning (ibid: 11) are explored in the classroom environment (viz. in relation to others), as well as for developing the process of individuation (viz. the process, as defined by Jung, by which we become aware of who we are as different from others) (Cranton & Roy 2003: 91). The emphasis therefore is on transformation as the emergence of the Self (ibid: 92). Relevant pedagogies to this end include "opportunities for learners to experience presentational ways of knowing" such as engagement with music, art, dance and storytelling (Taylor 2009: 11; *cf*. Tisdell & Tolliver 2009: 97; Tyler 2009: 136ff; Park 2006: 87; Chiu 2003: 175).

Cranton & Roy (2003) maintain however, that the various perspectives on transformative learning are not mutually exclusive and ought to be regarded holistically, co-existing, to further understand transformative learning theory (ibid: 96; *cf.* Mezirow in Dirkx & Mezirow 2006: 124). The role of affective and relational knowledge for teacher development is referred to in relation to the empirical data obtained from the PAR phase of this research, in Chapter 7 (*cf*. 7.3.1.4).

(v) Awareness of context

Two areas of critique levelled at Mezirow's conception of transformative learning as raised by Taylor (2009: 3, 4) include the "positionality" of learners towards the values espoused by transformative learning itself, and how the various contexts in which transformative learning may be implemented could shape related practice. Taylor (2009: 4) points out that research on transformative learning has mostly taken place in higher education settings and that little is known about the unique challenges that emerge in the various different contexts in which transformative

learning has been implemented and demonstrated (Taylor EW 2007). In my understanding of Mezirow's theory, I am in agreement with EW Taylor on these two seemingly undeveloped areas, and would add that the specific influences of cultural and religious forces on achieving the goals of transformative learning have not been adequately investigated either. To add weight to this contention, I refer to Langan, Sheese and Davidson's study (2009: 53) conducted in their various undergraduate sociology courses. These researchers experienced student resistance to attempts at transformative learning when students reacted to lifestyles such as lesbian parenting, as going against the grain of their cultural or religious beliefs. The goals of transformative learning could be undermined when democratic dialogue is seen by some to be invasive of their belief system (Langan, Sheese & Davidson 2009: 53).

In this research, the application of transformative learning occurred outside of the university context in the specific neighbourhoods or districts in which the research participants live and/or work (*cf.* 4.4.2 and 6.4.1). The geographical location of teacher-participants and their schools, their social-cultural history, as well as the cultural and religious composition of their communities were viewed as being likely influences on the nature of their participation in the research. "Awareness of context" as an element of transformative learning will be returned to in relation to the empirical study reported on in Chapter 6 (*cf*. 6.4.5).

(vi) Authentic relationships

Establishing authentic relationships between participants is pointed out by Taylor (2009: 13) as being integral to fostering transformative learning. In order that critical reflection does not become mechanical or hollow, the relationships between individuals in the learning context need to be open, honest, trusting and affirming. The reason for this, as has been noted at various points thus far, is that critical reflection requires participants to engage in open inquiry. Some participants may perceive situations of open inquiry as being threatening or offensive, as questioning of religious or cultural authority, or coercing, in the sense of revealing information about themselves or their customs that they believe should remain private (*cf.* Langan, Sheese & Davidson 2009: 53). The need for authentic relationships in fostering transformative learning is revisited in the action research phase of the empirical study and in the related findings in Chapter 6.4.7

3.2.3.5 Discursive communities: optimal learning conditions for transformative learning

Mezirow (1991: 207) maintains that the context in which transformative learning ought to be fostered is within "discursive communities" (Mezirow 1991: 198, 207). Discursive communities should be founded upon a philosophy that promotes freedom, tolerance, equality and democratic participation (Mezirow 1994: 226, 2000: 15). Implicit in this statement is the idea that authentic spaces need to be created in which "feelings of trust, solidarity, security and empathy are essential preconditions for free full participation in dialogue" (Mezirow 2000: 12), viz. to foster the core

elements of transformative learning. Mezirow (1991: 206) suggests that a facilitator or mentor or "empathetic provocateur" (ibid: 206) is imperative to assisting learners to open themselves up to alternative perspectives and to work through the dilemmas of replacing existing meaning perspectives with more dependable and relevant ones. Mandell & Herman (2009: 79; Mezirow 1997: 11) argue similarly that there is a strong relationship between transformative learning and an effective mentor. This point will be returned to at a later stage in this framework as a critical response to the "horizontal" approach to learning proposed by Wenger (2006b: 28) in a community of practice.

Optimal conditions for transformative learning and therefore for diversity include the following (Mezirow 1991: 77, 78, 2000: 13, 2009: 20):

- Participants must have accurate and complete information about a topic or issue, particularly when these are areas of dispute.
- Participants must be free from coercion and free to participate fully in dialogue. Values such as freedom, democracy, justice, equality and social cooperation should be cherished to provide the essential conditions under which learners can make sense of or find meaning in their frames of reference (Mezirow 1991: 199, 2000: 31).
- Participants are able to weigh evidence and assess arguments objectively.
- Openness to alternative perspectives must prevail so that participants can learn from one another (*cf.* Swidler 2004: 769; Nieto 2000: 312, 313).
- Participants have equal opportunity to participate, including opportunities to challenge, question and refute arguments presented, to engage in reflection and to hear others do the same (*cf.* Gutmann 1993: 2, 1996: 162; Young 2000: 23).

These optimal conditions are described as contributing to and enhancing mutual engagement in communities of practice for developing the professional knowledge base for Citizenship education/Religion education in a later section (3.4.4.3).

3.2.4 Critique of transformative learning theory

In this section a critique of certain features of transformative learning theory is undertaken where these pertain to teacher-learning for religious and cultural diversity in particular. These points of critique will be taken up in relation to the communities of practice concept for Citizenship education/Religion education (3.4.4).

At the outset of this chapter, it was pointed out that Mezirow's theory of transformative learning would be drawn upon for its usefulness in providing insight into how adults construe (personal) experience, construct meaning schemes and posit reasons for responding to human difference in

various ways. The following two areas of shortcoming are noted, however, where teacher-learning for diversity is concerned. The first is related to evidence of perspective transformation, viz. if all adult learners move naturally toward such an orientation; the second has to do with privileging argument and critical reasoning over other forms of dialogical communication as the means to overcoming conflicting issues (Mezirow 1991: 68) (*cf.* Young 2000: 37). These particular aspects of transformative learning contributed towards the formulation of the action research stages in the empirical study as well as to the analysis and interpretation of the data presented in Chapters 6 and 7.

3.2.4.1 Evidence of perspective transformation

According to Mezirow, a more developmentally advanced meaning perspective is one that is more open and inclusive (Mezirow 1991: 156; 2000: 19). The ideal outcome of premise reflection is that learners redefine a problem, norm, belief or practice and demonstrate the changes in their speech and actions (ibid: 197). Hence, perspective transformation should enable teacher-learners not only to deal openly with the diversity that they encounter in their schools, in their communities and in broader society (*cf.* Daloz 2000), but to critically reflect, and take action on the validity of unquestioned, taken-for-granted cultural or religious norms, and to challenge cultural hegemony and forms of authority when these prove to be oppressive.

The concern here is if it is possible to determine that perspective transformation has resulted, even though teachers have participated in a discursive community. Mezirow admits that “perspective transformation is a mode of learning that neither learner nor educator is able to anticipate or evoke upon demand” (Mezirow 1991: 202). This problem is exacerbated by the reality that certain cultural or religious groups harbour worldviews that discourage openness, dialogue and argumentation, which are the core elements of discursive communities (*cf.* Langan *et al* 2009: 53; Tennant 1993; Gergen 2003: 16). A perceived weakness, therefore, in Mezirow’s position on perspective transformation and adult development, is that he underestimates the power of social forces to shape the lives of individuals (*cf*. Tennant 1993: 37).

Taking up Tennant’s point here, I would agree and suggest furthermore that Mezirow does not argue explicitly in terms of the power of religious authorities or cultural norms and traditions to shape the habits of mind of people in relation to their communities. A democratic pluralist society exhibits extensive divergences in beliefs and values that have implications for conceptions of tolerance (*cf.* 1.9.3 (iv)). It is often the case that communities insulate themselves against outsiders or, as Fisher (1997: 423) contends, some groups harden the boundaries around themselves as they deny the validity of religions or worldviews other than their own (*cf.* 1.9.2 (ii)). Any form of interfaith, inter-religious, inter-denominational or inter-cultural dialogue would continue to be inhibited by the exclusivist beliefs of some individuals or groups (Fisher 1997: 426; Roux 2007b:

114, 118), an epistemic position that could be evident, not only amongst teachers of Life Orientation, but amongst parents of learners in schools as well (Pike 2008).

Whilst perspective transformation is central to the goals of communicative learning, it is possible that in learning about diverse religions and beliefs, some teachers will continue to verify their particular "claims to truth" by turning to their religious or cultural leaders and resist any suggestions of autonomous thinking (*cf.* 3.2.3.3 (ii)) (*cf.* Ferguson 1999: 162; Ferguson & Roux 2003a: 274). The reason why people would take such action is associated with their defining beliefs and values in terms of "Absolutes"[17] (Perry 1999: 43). As Perry has shown, "Absolutes" are associated with some form of "Authority" which is the "possessor" of the right answers (Perry 1999: 68; Perry 1999: glossary; *cf.* Fisher 1997: 426). This "Authority" might be scriptural or associated with a religious or spiritual leader or a divine being. When a learner clings to the idea of the "Absolute" there may be resistance to critical analysis, reflection and comparative thinking and therefore to "moving forward in thinking" (ibid: 81).

It is possible, therefore, that learners may identify so strongly with certain "Absolutes" that they may choose to disengage completely from any discussions of "otherness". They can be said to "Retreat" or "Escape" in Perry's terms (1999: 190). "Escape" occurs usually in order to avoid the tensions associated with critical reflection on dearly-held beliefs. However, the "Position" termed "Commitment" (ibid: 173, 180) in Perry's Scheme, in which a person is said to acknowledge the importance of "Commitment" to an own position while respecting the beliefs and values of others, resonates with the intellectual "shifts" associated with transformative learning. Enabling learners to make the intellectual shifts, however incremental these might be, is a goal of teacher-learning in discursive communities (*cf.* Taylor 2009: 5; Cranton & Roy 2003: 90).

Given South Africa's socio-political history, as well as the evidence from various research initiatives (Ferguson 1999; Ferguson & Roux 2003a, 2003b; Roux 2007b; Du Preez 2008; *cf.* Roux 1998), conservatism in South Africa is a reality that may stand in the way of transformative learning for Citizenship education as it is described and envisaged in the NCS (DoE 2003a: 11).

3.2.4.2 Privileging dialogue as argument over other forms of communication to foster transformative learning

Mezirow's (1991: 64) reference to communicative learning as the conduit of transformative learning includes the use of argumentative discourse to test the validity of truth claims, to weigh evidence, to test prejudices, biases, fears, and generally to develop a more dependable frame of reference (Mezirow 2000: 19, 1991: 68).

[17] The terms "Absolute", "Authority", "Commitment", "Retreat" and "Escape" are written with capital letters, since these are names of "Positions" in Perry's Developmental Scheme (1999).

In the context of teacher professional development, the value of teachers learning the skills of deliberation as argument cannot be underestimated, since argumentation may well be the primary mode of oral communication in Citizenship education classes. Argument or deliberation is clearly a skill that teachers require and need to be knowledgeable of, in order to foster democratic discourse in their classes (*cf.* Avery 2002: 125; Nussbaum 2002: 290; Gutmann 1996: 160). However, it is possible that argument, as "the construction of an orderly chain of reasoning from premises to conclusion" (Young 2000: 37), could result in some problems, experiences, injustices or needs being silenced. The reason for the silencing of the issues may be because these problems or needs do not find expression in the shared understandings of the majority in a discursive community (3.2.3.5) (Young 2000: 37; Nieto 2000: 43).

In response to Mezirow's privileging argument, I draw on Iris Young's (2000: 53) proposal of other modes of communication to generate openness. One such mode of communication is narrative (Young 2000: 53; *cf.* Tyler 2009: 137ff; Enslin *et al* 2001: 126, 127). According to Young (2000: 72) narrative or storytelling opens up opportunities for learners to make a point about an issue, to describe, explain or justify something to others that might otherwise go unnoticed (*cf*. Elliot 2005: 28). Young (2000: 72) differentiates between a "political narrative" and those forms of narrative "used to entertain". "Political" narratives give clearer expression to histories, traditions, cultural practices, value premises, symbols and the meanings that these have for people who narrate them than argument does (ibid: 75; Enslin *et al* 2001: 126). Narrative, in this sense, may serve as a more natural way of responding to issues in public in some communities than argumentation, thus opening up opportunities to communicate for more people and to give "reflective voice to situated experiences" (Young 2000: 73; Elliot 2005: 38).

Narrative may contribute to Deep Dialogue (cf. Swidler 2004; 3.2.3.4; 3.2.3.5) and therefore to what constitutes democratic engagement. As a form of democratic engagement, narrative is taken up in relation to the dimensions of communities of practice in section 3.4.4.3 and in the PAR phase of the empirical research in Chapter 6.

In the next section, I develop the premise, that the community of practice concept as conceptualised by Wenger, potentially provides the discursive space proposed by Mezirow (1991: 207) (3.2.3.5) for communicative learning.

3. 3 A SOCIAL THEORY OF LEARNING: BACKGROUND TO THE COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE CONCEPT

Although I have located the discussion of teacher-learning for Citizenship education in communities of practice as Wenger (1998, 2006a, 2006b; *cf.* Wenger *et al* 2002) has developed it in his later work, the concept cannot really be understood without referring to the seminal work of

Lave & Wenger (1991) in which the idea was initially posited. Lave and Wenger's seminal work (1991) offered a paradigm shift (Hughes *et al* 2007:1) to the study of learning. Their thesis on learning emerged in the wake of dissatisfaction with "standard paradigms" (Fuller 2007: 17) of learning in which, *inter alia*, learning is viewed in the following way:

- as being dependent on the presence of a recognised specialist;
- as always involving a process of knowledge transmission from an expert to a novice (*cf.* 2.2.4);
- as a "product" to be acquired, in the form of "codified and stable knowledge, reified in text books" (ibid: 17) (*cf.* 2.2.4);
- as being associated with cognitive processes in the minds of individuals.

In opposition to these assumptions (*cf.* 2.2), Lave & Wenger (1991, 2002) offered a radical critique of cognitivist theories of learning (Handley, Sturdy, Fincham & Clark 2006: 641). They argued that learning should not be defined merely as the acquisition of a body of factual knowledge by individuals, or only as individual cognitive processes (Lave & Wenger 1991: 14). Learning is rather a "process of social participation or situations of co-participation in communities of practice" (Wenger 1998: 21ff; Lave & Wenger 2002: 56ff; Smith 2003: 1; Jewson 2007: 68). Consequently, the focus on learning shifts from the individual as the primary unit of analysis, to the individual learning in a social context as the unit of analysis (Fuller 2007: 19; Mouza 2007: 169; Smith 1999).

In addition, the concept "legitimate peripheral participation" was used to characterise how learning occurs in a community of practice (Lave & Wenger 2002: 56ff; Wenger 1998: 11). This term was used to broaden the concept of apprenticeship central to the 1991 work "from a master/student or mentor/mentee relationship" to one of "changing participation and identity transformation in a community of practice" (Wenger 2006b: 3, 4, 1998: 11; Lave & Wenger 2002: 56). Legitimate peripheral participation concerns the process by which new-comers to a community become part of the practice (Lave & Wenger 2002: 59). It is the term used to refer to the relations between "new-comers" and more experienced members in the community of practice, referred to as "old-timers" (ibid: 56). Embedded in legitimate peripheral participation is the idea that when people join communities, they learn initially at the periphery. As they become more competent they move to the "centre" of the particular community, as they gain "mastery" of the learning and therewith become full participants in the community of practice (Lave & Wenger 2002: 56, 1999: 22, 23). Participation in a community of practice essentially takes place at multiple levels, since members come to the community having different interests, viewpoints and contributions to make to learning activities (Lave & Wenger 1999: 25).

It is significant to note the development in the thinking concerning communities of practice since the inception of this concept. Wenger (1998, 2002, 2006a, 2006b; *cf.* Jewson 2007: 69) has worked extensively at developing his and Lave's earlier thinking on communities of practice (1998, 2006b, Wenger *et al* 2002; *cf*. Fuller 2007: 21). Furthermore, Wenger has developed an enterprise of his own in which he has commercialised the communities of practice concept, making the idea available on the worldwide web, to organisations, associations and education, as a tool to manage knowledge-intensive situations (Wenger 2006a, 2006b; Hughes *et al* 2007: 3)[18]. Moreover, Wenger invited interested parties to participate in his research agenda through his online research proposal: *Learning for a small planet: a research agenda* (Wenger 2006b).

In *Learning for a small planet* Wenger is concerned with developing new learning models for the 21st century (Wenger 2006b: i) given the many challenges manifest in the world today, including the tensions associated with diversity. Religion and teaching are both social practices, hence, it seemed fitting to position this research, with its emphasis on the challenges associated with teaching and learning for diversity of religion or belief and culture, in a theory of social practice. The primary focus of a social theory of learning is on learning as social participation or on learning as a social activity (Wenger 1998: 4, 2006b: 12). It is this emphasis on learning as "active social participation" (Hughes *et al* 2007: 3) that sets Wenger's concept of learning "in community" apart from other supporters of approaches to learning in professional communities (*cf.* 2.3, 2.4). For this reason it is also appealing as a viable option for teacher development for Citizenship education/Religion education.

Although Lave & Wenger's 1991 work has been critiqued for not being developed into a full-blown theory of learning (Graven 2004: 178), Graven & Lerman (2003: 186) maintain that Wenger's work (meaning Wenger's 1998 work in particular), can be considered a theory in that it "constitutes a coherent level of analysis and yields a conceptual framework from which to derive general principles for understanding and enabling learning" (ibid: 186). For this reason, the community of practice concept is referred to as a "theory" and not merely a "concept" in this study, although the two terms are used interchangeably (*cf.* Wenger 2006b: 12).

3.4 COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

3.4.1 Defining communities of practice

The term "communities of practice" was coined to refer to groups of people who join together "to share concerns, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting or co-participating" in an ongoing way (Wenger *et al* 2002: 4; Wenger 2006a: 1; Fuller 2007: 19). As do other supporters of professional learning communities

[18] See also www.youtube.com. Numerous films advertising the communities of practice concept as well as various applications are available for viewing on the World Wide Web.

(Fullan 2002; Westheimer 2008; Cochran-Smith 2004) (*cf.* 2.3), Wenger (1998: 7) maintains that learning in communities challenges the traditional view that learning occurs as a "vertical" process involving a producer of knowledge passing on a prescribed package to recipients (Wenger 2006b: 28). Rather, learning occurs more effectively as a result of "horizontal" interaction between participants who engage in contributing to the practices of their communities (ibid: 29). The relevance of Wenger's (1998, 2006b) perspective on learning is a key idea in this study.

3.4.2 Scope of communities of practice theory for this study

Given the density of Wenger's (1998, 2006b) conceptualisation of the communities of practice concept, the discussion that follows has been narrowed down to the key concepts of communities of practice only as these pertain to the main research question upon which this study is based (1.5). The concept that runs throughout the chapter as the key theme, "learning as participation" (Wenger 1998: 56), underlies the communities of practice concept as envisaged for this study. Learning as participation refers to the process of being active in the practice of a learning community (Wenger 1998: 4), a principle fundamental to education for democracy.

In Wenger's (1998: 5) theory the communities of practice concept is embedded in the integration of four components, viz. practice, meaning, community and identity. Although each of these is examined for its applicability to a Citizenship education/Religion education community of practice, the conceptual analysis to follow is structured mainly around the concepts of "community" and "practice" and the way in which these are associated with one another in relation to "learning as participation" (Wenger 1998: 72).

It must be noted that although each of the four components of a community of practice has been the object of research in its own right (*cf.* Shulman & Shulman 2004; Mezirow 1991: 1ff, 2000: 16), each also has distinct meaning in relation to Wenger's conceptualisation of communities of practice. Hence, the discussion that follows is limited to the scope of these concepts within Wenger's theory. In addition, although weaknesses in the "community" concept have been pointed out by various researchers (*cf.* Baumann 1996: 14; Strike 1999; Westheimer 2008: 758; Hughes *et al* 2007; Jewson 2007: 69ff), it is not within the scope of this study to embark on a detailed critique of the concept "community". In the ensuing sections, however, I have identified shortfalls in the community concept where these are relevant to teachers from diverse backgrounds learning about diversity. It must also be noted that many of the critiques of the communities of practice concept have been levelled at Lave & Wenger's earlier work (1991) (*cf.* Hughes *et al* 2007), whereas, Wenger seems to have responded to such critiques by developing various communities of practice concepts more intensely in his later works (Wenger 1998, 2006b; Wenger *et al* 2002; *cf.* Lave & Wenger 1999, 2002). I have therefore focused on the later conceptualisations of communities of

practice concepts by Wenger (1998, 2006b; Wenger *et al* 2002), since it is these later developments that have shaped the communities of practice concept for this study.

The approach taken in this part of the chapter was first to define the components of communities of practice as they are dealt with by Wenger, and thereafter to interpret the components and concepts in relation to Citizenship education/Religion education as the domain of interest (3.4.4.1). In the ensuing conceptual analysis I have drawn on the core elements of communicative learning in transformative learning theory, viz. critical reflection, Deep Dialogue and critical thinking and awareness of context to add scope to the internal dynamics of a community of practice for Citizenship education/Religion education.

3.4.3 "Practice" as negotiation of meaning

"Practice" is the overarching idea in framing a professional learning community (*cf.* 2.3) as a community of practice. "Practice" embraces other concepts in the theory, viz. meaning and the negotiation of meaning, community, learning and identity (Wenger 1998: 5). Thus, any attempts to explain "practice" as an idea independent from this family of concepts in Wenger's theory, is simply not possible.

Wenger (1998: 47) associates "practice" with what people do and what they develop in order to do their jobs better. Practice therefore resides *with* the community of practitioners and their relations of "mutual engagement" (ibid: 73) (3.4.4.3). For this reason "community of practice" is not a synonym for a group, team or network, but constitutes a "shared history of learning" (Wenger 1998: 102). Integral to the concept of practice is the "negotiation of meaning", which is the source of productivity or generativity (ibid: 214) and therefore of learning in the community of practice. Negotiation of meaning in Wenger's theory involves the interaction of two processes, viz. "participation" and "reification" (Wenger 1998: 55, 58, 2006b: 17). These two concepts are not new ideas, but in Wenger's (1998, 2006b; *cf.* Jackson 1997: 52; Baumann 1996: 9) theory their duality in the process of negotiating meaning is integral to understanding the workings of a community of practice. These concepts are mentioned specifically for their relevance to generating the domain of interest for Citizenship education/Religion education, where conceptualisations of religion or belief, concepts within religions, and issues pertaining to religious and cultural diversity may be contentious issues in need of negotiation.

In Wenger's theory (1998: 55), "participation" refers to the "process of taking part" and also to the "relations with others" that reflect the process of taking part (ibid). Participation therefore entails not only taking part in the activities of the community of practice, but also requires mutual recognition amongst members of one another's ability to engage in the negotiation of meaning (ibid: 56). Hence, in the experience of mutuality, participation is also a source of identity (ibid: 56) (3.4.5), the

reason being that participation is contrasted with non-participation in a community of practice. Either could occur, depending on a member's status (or identity) in a community of practice. For example, a member is more likely to participate in discussions in a community of practice when she/he possesses the knowledge of an aspect of the practice that other members may not yet have acquired. Non-participation in this sense is related to "not knowing" in relation to the practice, perhaps as a newcomer, a situation which temporarily marginalises the person as a full participant (3.3) (Wenger 1998: 67). Non-participation may however also be as a result of a member's resistance to participation on the grounds that he/she disagrees with elements of the "practice" (ibid: 77). Continuous non-participation could be associated with negative reifications of aspects of the domain which could ultimately terminate membership (ibid: 67).

Every community of practice produces reifications as it constructs its domain. Reifications include "tools, symbols, stories, terms and concepts", a perfectly natural tendency in terms of developing a domain of interest (Wenger 1998: 59, 2006b: 17) (*cf.* 3.4.4.1). Reification hence becomes the means by which a community creates points of focus and entices members to participate in developing the domain of interest and the shared repertoire in the community of practice (Wenger 1998: 59). However, "reification" has two aspects. On the one hand there is power in reification, because it is useful and necessary (Wenger 1998: 61) to provide the concepts for the domain of interest. On the other hand, however, the danger of reification lies in its harmful or destructive potential. This may happen when individuals or social groups are defined in essentialist terms (Young 1997: 389; 2000: 27) based on misconceptions or stereotyping related to a lack of knowledge or inadequate information. Negative reifications may result in unjust treatment or marginalising members of a community of practice, which could consequently lead to non-participation by those members (Wenger 1998: 91). This understanding of reification is particularly relevant to this study, since non-participation or the exclusion of members on the grounds of misconception pertaining to social group goes against the grain of democratic Citizenship education (*cf.* 1.9.2).

In education more broadly, Wenger (1998: 265) maintains that knowledge is often reduced to reified terms, when it is decontextualized. Teachers often depend on the reified subject matter obtained in textbooks and other sources which they reproduce in the classroom without attempting to gain some ownership of it (ibid). This claim substantiates my critique of INSET programmes (*cf*. 2.2) for their failure to engage teachers in a process of continuous inquiry to augment the professional knowledge base in such a way as to meet the demands of curriculum reform in relation to diversity. It is for this same reason that Fullan (1993, 2002), Ranko-Ramaili (2003), Cochran-Smith (2004) and Hoban (2002), for example, are critical of teacher development in the form of transmission-oriented programmes (2.2.3). Communities of practice provide a forum in which to deconstruct essentialist views or harmful reifications of religions, cultures and ethnicities.

The deconstruction of essentialist views and the reconstruction of more accurate conceptualisations pertaining to diversity become a central aspect of mutual engagement in relation to constructing the domain of interest to be examined in the sections to follow (3.4.4.1; 3.4.4.3) (*cf*. Slattery 2006: 3).

The duality of participation and reification cannot be seen apart from the internal dimensions that give a community of practice its particular identity. These connections are elaborated upon in the next section.

3.4.4 "Community" of practice

In spite of the critiques of Wenger's conceptualisation of "community", the term captures a sense of the relationships amongst the participants in the "practice" (3.4.3) (*cf.* Hughes *et al* 2007, Jewson 2007: 69; Roberts 2006; Handley *et al* 2006). In addition, Wenger's framing of the internal dynamics of the community of practice remains, as Jewson (2007: 69) suggests, "a powerful point of reference". The internal dynamics of a community of practice are defined by three dimensions of practice, viz:

- A shared domain of interest (Wenger 2006a: 1, 1998: 73; Wenger *et al* 2002: 29ff);
- Mutual engagement (1998: 77), also referred to as "community" in the online[19] references to communities of practice;
- A shared repertoire (1998: 82), also referred to as "practice" in the online references. This dimension includes the body of knowledge, the methods, stories, documents and tools associated with the domain of interest (Wenger 1998: 74; Wenger *et al* 2002: 29).

Each of the three dimensions is inextricably linked to the other and together they are the source of coherence of any community of practice (Wenger 1998: 72). The three dimensions of communities of practice are envisaged in this study as maximising the goals of transformative learning (3.2.3.4) and for defining the discursive community for teacher-learning for Citizenship education/Religion education. The sections that follow must therefore be read in conjunction with the optimal conditions for transformative learning (3.2.3.5) proposed by Mezirow (1991: 198, 207). These conditions also contribute to the meanings of both "practice" and "participation" in conceptualising Citizenship education/Religion education communities of practice (3.4.4), but taking cognisance of the various areas of critique of transformative learning theory (3.2.4). This conceptual understanding is developed in the next section.

[19] *cf.* Wenger 2006a: 1; www.youtube.com.

3.4.4.1 A shared domain of interest: Citizenship education/Religion education

As one of the dimensions of a community of practice, the shared domain of interest can be defined generically as being "the particular venture" or the particular body of knowledge to which members of the community are committed (Wenger 1998: 77, 2006a: 1). The idea behind a "shared domain of interest" means that members engage in constructing the domain. This process is referred to by Wenger (1998: 95) as "learning in practice" and it is this aspect of teacher-learning that is perceived to be more effective than the transmission of a fixed body of knowledge or information from a producer to a recipient (3.3) (Wenger 2006b: 28; *cf.* Shulman & Shulman 2004). Wenger (1998: 77) advocates that the shared domain of interest is defined by the participants as they pursue it, and contribute to it, through negotiation and meaning-making (3.4.3).

In the light of this perspective on learning, a significant characteristic of the shared domain is associated with what Wenger (1998: 79) refers to as the "indigenous" nature of the shared domain. This particular characteristic of the domain suggests that communities of practice naturally respond to local conditions or "situated knowledge" (*cf.* Young 2000: 70; Cochran-Smith 2004: 15; Moore 2006: 6), but simultaneously develop in relation to the larger institutions or organisations of which they may be a part. These include social, cultural, educational, religious or business institutions or organisations. Hence, whilst the content knowledge or domain for Citizenship education/Religion education is defined by the NCS (DoE 2003a) and other policy documents (DoE 2001, 2003b), undergirded as they are by an equitable approach to religion, the "situatedness" of communities of practice means that teachers are able to draw on examples of religions, cultures, beliefs, worldviews and traditions as they arise out of their particular neighbourhoods, communities, villages or cities (*cf.* Cochran-Smith 2004: 15, 145; Moore 2006: 6). Hence, content for the Religion education focus area of Citizenship education becomes a reflection of the life-world of teachers, their learners and their parents based on inclusive principles (Nieto 2000: 312, 313). This selection does not suggest that religions, beliefs, traditions or ethnicities not evident in the broader South African society should not be investigated. Rather, the immediate social context serves as the starting point to generate content knowledge.

The domain of interest therefore becomes the professional knowledge base for Citizenship education/Religion education and could include the following (*cf.* 1.3):

- Explicit knowledge 'about' religion itself, diverse religions and beliefs, including minority religions or alternative spiritualities (Partridge 2004) to which school-based learners are likely to express an interest. Examples include Rastafari and Wicca.
- Concepts that contribute towards both political and religious literacy (*cf.* Roux 2007a: 472; Moore 2006: 1) (1.3), such as pluralism, democracy, human rights and the role of

declarations of human rights with regard to religion or belief (*cf.* DoE 2003a, 2003b; Stradling 2009).

- The meaning of values such as freedom, equality, tolerance, social justice and civic responsibility in relation to diversity (*cf.* Nussbaum 1997; Kymlicka & Norman 2000: 6) (1.9.3).
- Local experiences, or situated knowledge of religion or culture which add richness to the concept 'diversity' in what ever form it may take in different regions in South Africa (for example, urban life will provide different religious and/or cultural experiences different from those provided by rural life) (*cf.* Moore 2006: 6; Cochran-Smith 2004: 15; Young 2000: 70).
- Diversity within established religions, viz. denominations or sects (*cf.* Jackson 1997, 2004a: 88; Chidester 1996; Ferguson 2006).
- Diversity-related issues in terms of conflicting truth claims such as religion or belief and science, including evolution and fossil finds; religion or belief and gay and lesbian sexual orientations (*cf.* Barnard 1993; Richardson 2007a, 2007b); religion, culture and gender; various youth sub-cultures (*cf.* Chapter 6, PAR Stages 2, 3, 4 and 5).

3.4.4.2 A shared domain: the teacher's role in perpetuating democratic values

The teacher's role in defining the shared domain for Citizenship education/Religion education is significant, since it is the teacher who is ultimately the mediator of the knowledge base and values of democratic Citizenship education in the classroom (Ferguson 1999; Ferguson & Roux 2003b; Weisse 2009a: 8, 9). Participation in negotiating a meaningful practice for Citizenship education locates teachers in a space to which they are often unaccustomed (*cf.* 2.2.3). A "practice" thus emerges out of meaningful interaction or negotiation with co-participants in a community, rather than teachers having to contend with a "scripted text" which has little or no relevance at all to their particular socio-cultural contexts (2.2.4) (*cf.* Ranko-Ramaili 2003). Based on the contentions of transformative learning theorists, it is more than likely that a teacher's frame of reference will shape the way in which he/she contributes to learning about diversity in the community of practice (*cf.* Ter Avest & Bakker 2009: 23). Teachers may provide valuable first-order experiences of beliefs, religious or cultural experiences, rituals and traditions, but their perceptions of others, influenced by their own frames of reference, will inevitably shape the domain of interest. Hence, Wenger's (1998: 95) reference to "learning in practice" in relation to Citizenship education may require that teachers critically reflect on how they understand diversity and how they will extend and mediate not only knowledge about religions, beliefs and cultures in classroom situations, but democratic principles and values as well (*cf.* 3.2.3.5). The shared domain of interest for Citizenship education ought to actualise democratic values in the choice of content and in the way in which content is presented. One could argue that a "politics of recognition" (Taylor 1994; *cf.* Young 1997) ought to define the internal dynamics of a community of practice. This statement can be interpreted in two ways: first,

the question as to *who* contributes to the shared domain of interest is significant; and second, *what* members of the community deem to be relevant for inclusion ("full participation") (Wenger 1998: 167; *cf.* Cochran-Smith 2004: 145; Nieto 2000: 311).

In terms of the former, recognition assigns to all who share in developing the domain "equal dignity and courtesy", and "equal status" (Taylor 1994: 106, 107; *cf.* Rockefeller 1994: 87). Such principles of recognition are necessary for knowledge creation itself to become a democratic venture. In terms of the latter a challenge for Citizenship education/Religion education ultimately is embedded in what teachers choose to teach or choose to exclude (*cf.* Gutmann 1996: 156), an issue that ought to be unpacked as an aspect of teacher-learning in a community of practice. Exercising a democratic perspective in selecting content for the knowledge base for Citizenship education/Religion education requires teachers to challenge their own assumptions concerning cultural and religious differences, on that basis to identify the stereotypes to be deconstructed (Nieto 2000: 12), and to be conscious of discrimination, racism and prejudice in relation to their own practice (Mezirow 2000; Nieto: 2000: 35, 42; Nussbaum 2002; Gutmann 1996: 158).

3.4.4.3 Mutual engagement: communities of practice as democratic communities

According to Wenger (1998: 73; Wenger 2006a: 1), the first characteristic of practice in a community is located in the mutual engagement of the participants. However, I have positioned mutual engagement as second in order after the shared domain, since in all likelihood it is interest in the domain that draws individuals into the community in the first place and is the source of engagement. Moreover, the concept "mutual engagement" (Wenger 1998: 73) implies that democratic principles are inherent in the community of practice concept, and therefore that learning is a democratic enterprise in this context. "Mutual engagement" as a dimension of practice also operationalises "negotiation of meaning", "learning in practice" and "learning through participation".

The principle of "learning through participation" (Wenger 1998: 95) suggests that members connect with one another's knowledge and skills and assist where knowledge and skills may be lacking. Contrary to the images of "peace, happiness and harmony" (Wenger 1998: 77) that the concept "community" evokes (*cf.* 3.5.5), mutual engagement does not necessarily evoke this. Mutual engagement could mean complimentary contributions, overlapping forms of competence (Wenger 1998: 76, 2006b: 30) or disagreement, challenges and competition (ibid 1998: 77). With this point in mind, heterogeneity and not homogeneity is a hallmark of a well-functioning community of practice and integral to learning for diversity in a deliberative sense (Wenger *et al* 2002: 35; Cochran-Smith 2004: 66) (2.3.3; 3.2.3.4 (iii)).

3.4.4.4 Mutual engagement, communicative learning and democratic values

In constructing the theoretical frame for this study, I envisaged mutual engagement as a dimension of practice, by extension, incorporating principles of communicative learning (3.2.3.3) (Mezirow 2009: 20). Hence, teacher-learning for Citizenship education/Religion education includes acquiring the skills associated with Deep Dialogue and critical reflection as these were discussed in relation to fostering transformative learning (3.2.3.4). Although a democratic process is implicit in communities of practice as noted in 3.4.4.3, the meaning of mutual engagement ought to be explicitly defined in relation to teacher development for Citizenship education/Religion education.

The principles of inclusion, equality, reasonableness and publicity are identified by Young (2000) and Gould (1988), for example, as being imperative to the democratic project. Hence tension, disagreement and conflict should not be viewed in deficit terms as being potentially threatening to the existence of the community of practice and thus avoided. Instead, disagreement ought to be a source for negotiating meaning across differences, as a means to acknowledging, not explaining away differences (*cf.* Barnes 2009: 43). Barnes (2009) and Gearon (2004), for example, argue that in order to teach tolerance and conflict resolution, teachers of "citizenship and religious education" need to include issues of religious and cultural conflict in their classes (*cf.* Avery 2002). It follows therefore that as teachers learn in communities of practice, religious, cultural and ideological differences ought not to be glossed over or avoided for the purpose of maintaining harmony in the community of practice. Ideological differences ought to be foregrounded and engaged with dialogically to develop skills to deal with tolerance and intolerance, conflict and conflict resolution, to prepare future citizens, as Gutmann (1993: 3) puts it, "for participating intelligently in the political processes that shape society" (*cf.* Nieto 2000: 307; Baumfield 2003).

An important point to note here is that the principle of "mutuality" is central in defining this dimension of practice in community. The examples that Wenger uses to explain mutuality are, however, related to corporate enterprises (Wenger 1998: 45ff). For the purposes of confronting the complexities associated with Citizenship education/Religion education, mutuality must be extended to refer more explicitly to equal recognition of the different religious and non-religious beliefs, cultural and political orientations represented in the community of practice (*cf.* Rockefeller 1994: 87).

Also, mutuality must be coupled with reciprocity (*cf*. 1.9.3 (ii), (iii)) as teachers learn about and reflect upon multiple and contradictory perspectives on reality (Nieto 2000: 311, 317). Teacher learning programmes that focus on different and contradictory perspectives should include learning the mediation skills to foster discussion in relation to diversity in the classroom (*cf.* Ferguson 1999; Ferguson & Roux 2003a; Du Preez 2008). Reciprocity means that members of the community of

practice are recognised as equal agents (Gould 1988: 291), assigning equal opportunity to engage in the activities of the community (*cf.* 3.4.4.2).

3.4.4.5 A shared repertoire for Citizenship education/Religion education

A "shared repertoire" (Wenger 1998: 82, 2006a: 2), as the third dimension of practice, comprises the resources that become available to the members of a community of practice as a result of the mutual engagement related to a shared domain of interest.

A "repertoire" includes the following (Wenger 1998: 82):

- Routines, actions and methods of doing things;
- Words, concepts and terminology;
- Concrete tools, materials or artefacts;
- Narratives, symbols and genres that the community produces in the course of its history of practice.

Participation in a community of practice requires members to know the meanings of concepts, beliefs and reifications associated with the domain of interest. The repertoire of a community however, should contribute to the shared practice in "a dynamic and interactive sense" (Wenger 1998: 84). To elaborate: the repertoire combines both "reificative" and "participative" elements, two concepts which contribute to the ongoing negotiation of meaning in communities of practice (3.4.3) (Wenger 1998: 61, 62). These concepts are mentioned again at this point, since they carry implications for how religion, religions and diversity of religion or belief are viewed or represented in the domain of interest and shared repertoire of a Citizenship education/Religion education community of practice (*cf.* Jackson 1997: 49, 2003: 82; Chidester 2002b: 14).

A particularly significant aspect of the repertoire is the nature of the discourse related to the domain (Wenger 1998: 83, 2006b: 17). In order to become an insider to the practice of the community and to participate fully, a person would be required to learn the discourse (including the reifications) of the domain. On the contrary, however, shared beliefs amongst members, in the sense of having "the same mental objects or models" is not exclusively what the shared repertoire is about (Wenger 1998: 84). As has been pointed out in relation to mutual engagement, complete agreement in terms of literally shared meanings or beliefs is not an anticipated outcome of the shared domain of interest (ibid: 84, 2006b: 18). It is, and should be, possible that mis-understandings or misconceptions of terms, concepts, symbols or routines articulated by members of a community could, through a process of negotiation, become opportunities to generate different or more accurate meanings of beliefs or concepts (ibid: 1998: 84, 2006b: 18). This conceptualisation is particularly relevant to how religions and cultural groups are represented in a

Citizenship education/Religion education community of practice (*cf.* Jackson 1997: 49, 69). The repertoire may also be different for each community depending on the social context (6.4.2, Stage 2 FG2#8; 6.4.3.3 Stage 3 *Reflections*). I propose that a generic repertoire could comprise the following three elements outlined below, but that these would be determined by the particular socio-cultural contexts of teachers, learners and their school communities.

(i) The teacher-participants are a valuable resource

The biographies of teachers could be drawn upon as resources in the community of practice. Hence, the teachers' own narratives of their experiences of religion or belief contribute towards building the shared repertoire and need not necessarily pose a threat to how religion is treated in the community of practice. Within the context of the community of practice, teachers also have the opportunity to reflect on their professional and personal histories (*cf.* Brown 2004: 81; Ter Avest & Bakker 2009: 16) in ways that allow these two aspects of their identity to inform the domain (the body of knowledge), the shared repertoire, and therewith contribute to the concept "learning in practice". The stock of knowledge (Jarvis 1987), or frames of reference (Mezirow 1991: 46) (3.2.3.1) of teachers may need to be subjected to critical review by peers. However intolerant religious views, ethnocentric or racist perspectives would not qualify as valid in relation to the values implicit in the repertoire of a *democratic* Citizenship education community of practice (*cf*. 1.9.2).

(ii) The shared practice contributes towards the repertoire

Principles of multicultural education should underlie the repertoire in terms of what it means for teachers to develop what Gay (2002) refers to as "culturally responsive practice" (*cf.* Banks *et al* 2005; Banks 1997, 2001; Nieto 2000; Cochran-Smith 2004). A "culturally responsive practice" would ensure that explicit content knowledge and pedagogy for mediating learning "about" and "for" religious and cultural diversity contribute towards defining the repertoire for an inclusive Citizenship education (*cf.* 1.9.2). Moreover, the domain of interest and mutual engagement provide access to the reifications of Citizenship education and Religion education evident in the discourse of the National Curriculum Statements (DoE 2002, 2003a) and the values of democratic citizenry, viz. the *meanings* of reciprocity, mutuality and tolerance, which become integral to the shared repertoire of a Citizenship education community of practice (*cf.* Gould 1988: 291ff).

(iii) The repertoire emerges from situated knowledge or experience

With reference to diversity, Nieto (2000: 352) argues that there are no static recipes for the inclusion of diverse religions and cultures in a learning context. The reasons are obvious, since in a pluralist society, each educational community will reflect different "mixes" of cultures, religions, ethnicities and ways of thinking about the world. Communities of practice therefore ought to be

inclusive of the varying perspectives and worldviews that contribute towards the situated knowledge associated with the demographics of the school context/s (*cf.* Cochran-Smith 2004: 70).

In relation to Citizenship education/Religion education, perhaps the richest and most colourful contributions to the repertoire will emerge from local experiences of religions and cultures, including personal narratives, mythology, symbolism, art and architecture, hymns, poetry and prayers; styles of religious or cultural dress particular to communities of people in different regions of South Africa; and histories of religious and cultural communities (*cf.* PAR Stages 3, 4 and 6, 6.4). Members of a community may therefore contribute concrete artefacts or collections of material objects (icons, meditation beads, prayer mats, items of clothing, pots) and visual resources in the form of film or personal photographs to the discursive space. In most regions in South Africa examples of sacred spaces including buildings (mosques, churches, synagogues and temples) or places in the open, including the stone circles of the urban Zionists and Church of the Nazarites (Shembe) may be evident, as well as sacred natural phenomena, such as mountains, rivers, plants and trees. These are the "tangibles" of religious and/or cultural ways of life that learners "bring to school" with them (Nieto 2000: 140), but the less tangible manifestations such as styles of communication (greetings, for example), or family values and relationships also contribute to the shared repertoire (Cochran-Smith 2004: 75; Enslin *et al* 2001: 126; Nieto 2000: 139, 140). Acknowledging the religious and cultural artefacts that learners "bring to school" means affirming the diversity of learners and their parents, who are in fact connected to the repertoire (Cochran-Smith 2004: 72; Nieto 2000: 340). In this way, principles of social justice pedagogy are also demonstrated.

3.4.5 Identity

"Identity" is the fourth component that defines the internal dynamics of a community of practice (Wenger 1998: 145) and is inextricably linked to meaning, practice and community in the theory of communities of practice. It is not within the scope of this inquiry to analyse "identity" in terms of the myriad studies that have been conducted on identity, identity formation or social identity in the social sciences[20]**.** Identity is examined in this study only for its significance to teacher-learning in a community of practice.

In this study the identities of the teacher (*cf.* 3.4.5.2) are significant for understanding participation in relation to shared practice. Learning in a community of practice is not simply about developing one's own knowledge and practice, but also involves a process of understanding identity in terms of status in the various communities of practice to which one may belong (Handley *et al* 2006: 644).

[20] See Jarvis J (2008) where the social identity of the teacher and religious freedom are covered extensively.

The following aspects of learning, practice and identity are referred to for their relevance to this study:

3.4.5.1 Learning and identity in practice

The connection between identity and practice is associated with competence in relation to the domain of interest in a community of practice (Wenger 1998: 151; *cf.* Jewson 2007: 71). In order to develop such a community, the identity of members must be acknowledged to ensure their engagement with one another and to perpetuate participation as the core activity. The interplay between participation and reification in a community of practice has profound implications for coming to terms with the diversity of individuals in a community (Wenger 1998: 149). To elaborate on this statement, engagement in the practice gives participants certain experiences of participation and therefore of learning, which contribute towards their identity as participants in the community (ibid: 227; *cf.* Gorodetsky, Barak & Harari 2007: 100). Participation therefore reifies individuals first and foremost as participants with certain kinds of professional knowledge, not on the grounds of their ethnic, religious or cultural identity (*cf.* Zellermayer & Tabak 2007). In the light of teacher diversity, negative reifications of members on the grounds of their beliefs (religious or other), cultural or ethnic identity could lead to exclusion and therefore to non-participation in the learning activities of the community of practice.

Identity is related more specifically to participation in the three dimensions of practice (Wenger 1998: 151; *cf.* Jewson 2007: 71):

(i) In relation to mutual engagement, participants need to develop expectations about how to interact, how to treat one other, and how to work together. Participants become who they are by being able to play a part in the relations of engagement that constitute the community. Hence, identity can be defined in terms of “participation” or of “non-participation” (Wenger 1998: 165) on the grounds that not everyone will know everything about the domain of interest. Not everyone will be in a position to participate at every level in relation to the domain of interest either. It is in this sense that the teachers’ particular identities, religious or secular, their culture and ethnicity, potentially enrich learning in practice.

(ii) In relation to being accountable to a shared domain of interest, participants are required to invest in, and to value, the particular domain (Wenger 2002a: 1, 1998: 152, 153). Identity is therefore related to a sense of belonging to this particular community of practice as participants develop “a perspective” (ibid: 153) in relation to the domain while participating continuously in generating knowledge and skills. To reiterate a point made earlier, all of the members of a community do not need to share the same religious or cultural

worldview in order to establish a sense of identity in the community. Identity is also related to the teachers' knowledge about religions and traditions and the pedagogical skills for classroom practice that they already possess. Identity may, therefore, manifest in the different interpretations offered from different religious and cultural perspectives represented by members of the community of practice (Wenger 1998: 153; Cochran-Smith 2004: 22). Difference in the community of practice becomes a resource rather than a liability.

(iii) In relation to negotiating a repertoire, the sustained engagement of members in a community of practice results in the ability to interpret and make use of the repertoire of that practice (Wenger 1998: 153; *cf.* Roux 2007a). Identity is related to the competence of utilising the repertoire and sharing in the history of the practice.

In the light of teacher-learning in a Citizenship education/Religion education community of practice, identity cannot be equated with reifications to the point of creating and maintaining invidious stereotypes (Wenger 1998: 151). In fact, the tendency of some individuals or groups to regard social group designations or categories as being constitutive of a person's identity must be an area of concern challenged through the processes of mutual engagement in the community of practice (3.2.3.5) (*cf.* Young 1997: 386). Moreover, identity must always be seen as on-going in relation to participation as each participant finds a unique place in the community of practice. A participant's "place" and "identity" in the community are further integrated and further defined over time in the course of engagement in practice (Wenger 1998: 154).

3.4.5.2 Learning, identity and generational encounters

According to Wenger (1998: 157) different generations bring different perspectives to the encounter in communities of practice, because their identities are invested in different moments in the history of the practice. However, this does not suggest that newcomers do not have something substantial and new to contribute to generating knowledge in relation to the shared domain. Wenger (1998: 157) suggests that as newcomers negotiate their identity there will be evidence of different degrees of continuity and discontinuity with the practice. Although Wenger did not necessarily have the chronological age of members of the community in mind, in the context of this study, in which diversity is the central theme, the chronological age and life experiences of members are significant, particularly in terms of the frames of reference and hence the assumptions about diversity that teachers may bring to the community of practice (*cf.* Mezirow 2000; Jarvis 1987: 57). As noted in a previous section, participation in a community potentially adds to the richness of the domain of interest and the shared repertoire in terms of diversity. I suggest in addition that older members (in the sense of age) bring memories of their experiences

to the community and in this sense enhance both the engagement and the repertoire of the community (*cf.* 6.4.2, PAR Stage 2, 6.4.4 Stage 4).

3.4.5.3 Identity as multi-membership

The expression “identity as multi-membership” is used by Wenger (1998: 158) to refer to the idea that in reality people belong to more than one community of practice at a time, viz. social, cultural, religious and professional. People participate in and develop their identities in the different communities in different ways (Handley *et al* 2006: 647). It may be that the potential for tension and conflict arises in any one of the communities to which a teacher belongs in relation to another, since the practices and identities will be different in each. Although identity in Wenger’s theory refers specifically to a member’s competence in relation to the practice, it is inevitable that the social identities and beliefs of members will influence the extent to which they are willing to participate in constructing and shaping the domain in any one community as compared with another (Hughes *et al* 2007: 172; *cf.* Ferguson & Roux 2004: 22) (*cf.* 6.4.7, PAR Stage 6, SSI6#Theme 3).

However, multi-membership in different communities could positively influence engagement in different domains. The ideal situation resides in the members’ willingness to create what Wenger (1998: 114) refers to as “boundary practices” and “overlapping practices” to initiate and sustain the connections between practices. Boundary practices may address conflicts, reconcile perspectives and help participants to find resolutions between practices so that communities of practice “create connections beyond themselves” (ibid: 115) (7.4.1). Sometimes, connections between practices occur as a result of overlap between two practices. In relation to Citizenship education/Religion education communities of practice, such connections are necessary to initiate and sustain democratic dialogue between communities that historically have erected rigid boundaries in relation to others; and also to confront elements of one domain which might be inappropriate, incomprehensible or offensive to another community (Wenger 1998: 160) (for example, intolerance towards racial or religious differences in one community and democratic openness in another) (7.4.1). In this situation, Wenger uses the term “identity as reconciliation” (ibid: 159) which requires the construction of an identity that embraces and affirms different meanings and forms of participation within and across communities of practice. An identity of reconciliation resonates with Mezirow’s goals of transformative learning, through which a person, as a result of social engagement (critical reflection and Deep Dialogue), develops a more open and inclusive frame of reference.

3.5 CRITIQUE OF THE COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE CONCEPT

The community of practice concept was analysed in this chapter for its applicability as an approach to teacher-learning for Citizenship education/Religion education. A critique of the limitations and weaknesses of the concept "communities of practice" follows (*cf.* Roberts 2006; Handley *et al* 2006; Jewson 2007). Since the community of practice concept has been applied in corporate contexts mainly as a tool for knowledge management, the extant critiques are aimed at communities of practice in the corporate context (Wenger 1998: 45ff; Van Eeden 2004; Roberts 2006; Handley *et al* 2006; Hughes *et al* 2007: 1ff). Whilst these have been useful in informing my critique of some of the key concepts that give communities of practice their scope, my own critique is chiefly of the efficacy of the concept for teacher-learning and development for Citizenship education/Religion education (2.4). The reason for adopting this stance has to do with how differences in social contexts will influence applications of a community of practice approach to learning for diversity (Hughes *et al* 2007: 172; *cf.* Roberts 2006: 626).

The following areas of critique are therefore mooted for their relevance to the challenges infused into a community of practice by differences in religion and belief, culture and ethnicity (*cf.* Hughes *et al* 2007: 172).

3.5.1 The "community" concept in situated learning perspectives

The first area of critique is associated with the concept "community" itself (*cf.* 2.3; 3.4.1) (Jewson 2007: 68; Wenger *et al* 2002: 140). At least two problems have been identified with the concept, both of which are relevant to this study. The first is associated with the idea of "horizontal learning" (Wenger 2006b: 28). Community approaches to learning have been shown to be useful in allowing members to share and negotiate the construction of knowledge in relation to a particular domain. In contrast, however, it is equally possible that a community may become locked into itself when there is a lack of an injection of new ideas, either by innovative members with particular knowledge and skills, or by invited specialists (Hoban 2002: 42, 55). Wenger (1998: 214) himself has pointed out that the experiences and competences of members must be allowed to remain in tension, otherwise learning is likely to slow down and practice to become stale. A downside of communities of practice is associated with them fortifying or reifying themselves against innovation and multiple perspectives when they ought to be loci through which knowledge continues to be created or generated (Wenger 1998: 214; Wenger *et al* 2002: 139; Billet 2007: 57).

A second area of critique of the "community" concept is associated with the homogenising tendency of communities in general. Wenger *et al* (2002: 141) point out that communities of practice can "reproduce counterproductive patterns" that reflect the "narrow unjust prejudices of society" (ibid: 141). Hence, in relation to multi-membership in different communities, the possibility exists that the perspectives held by members of one community (e.g. a religious community), may

disrupt the practice of another (e.g. community of professional educators) (Wenger 1998: 133). This would go against the grain of Wenger's argument that communities of practice are meant to be heterogeneous in order to accommodate multiple perspectives. The ideal situation is engendered when the religious, cultural and ethnic experiences of members contribute to the quality of mutual engagement, enrich the conceptualisation of the shared domain of interest, and broaden the scope of the repertoire (Billet 2007: 57; Wenger *et al* 2002: 159).

3.5.2 Homogeneity and diversity in communities of practice

Even though Wenger (1998: 75) has shown that homogeneity is not a condition for mutual engagement in communities of practice and that they should not be viewed as "havens of togetherness" (ibid: 77), various critics (*cf*. Jewson 2007: 69) have suggested that the communities of practice concept fails to provide sufficiently for the resolution of disagreement and conflict beyond the tensions between new-comers and old-timers (*cf.* 3.3). Differences in a community in terms of outlook, worldview, personality and age are stipulated as normative in the context of large corporate settings (Wenger 1998, 2006b; Wenger *et al* 2002: 6, 23). Specific references to ethnicity, religious and cultural diversity, and how these may impact on mutual engagement in enterprises where social differences contribute to shared knowledge, are however not explored in Wenger's theory (*cf.* Wenger 1998: 76; Hughes *et al* 2007: 172). In this regard, Wenger does not seem to offer the tools or conceptual mechanisms for analysing tensions or reasons for disagreement either (Jewson 2007: 72), including ideological tensions associated with religious and cultural diversity. This apparent shortcoming may be consequent on the "managerial" (Hughes *et al* 2007: 4) or corporate context from which his conceptual analysis arises (*cf.* Wenger 1998: 18, 35, 45, 2006b: 17).

3.5.3 "Participation" in communities of practice

Handley *et al* (2006: 649) draw attention to the difficulties in operationalising "participation" in a community of practice and suggest that there is a degree of ambiguity in it. At the heart of this ambiguity is the difficulty of knowing when an individual is or is not participating (ibid: 649) in the activities of a community of practice. Whilst participation is the ideal, it is equally possible that a person could be going through the motions of participation yet not participating perhaps for lack of commitment to the domain of interest (Handley *et al* 2006: 649).

In relation to diversity, a further reason for lack of participation which Wenger also does not address may be related to a lack of acceptance on the grounds of the racial, ethnic, cultural or religious identity of some members by others in a community of practice. Wenger (1998: 56) maintains that participation depends on "mutual recognition amongst members to negotiate meaning" which does not necessarily entail "equality or respect or even collaboration" (ibid: 56). Wenger suggests furthermore that even the meanings of "inequality" are negotiated in the context

of this process of mutual recognition (ibid: 56). I would argue, however, that the validity of Wenger's contention in this regard depends on the shared domain of interest of the community of practice. In the context of Citizenship education/Religion education, where members need to accept each other, then negotiating inequality in terms of ethnicity, culture and religion or belief defies the purpose of this kind of community of practice and may undermine the quality of the mutual engagement.

In fostering transformative learning in discursive communities, Mezirow (1991: 198) pinpoints "equal opportunity to participate" as a condition for communicative learning (3.2.3.3), viz. the opportunity to challenge, question, refute, to reflect and to hear others do the same. These cognitive skills are essential prerequisites for critical reflection and dialogue in discursive communities (3.2.3.5). Thus, based on Mezirow's view, Wenger's perspective on mutual recognition in a community of practice must extend beyond recognising the mutual *ability* to negotiate meaning in relation to a domain of interest, to include an affective or moral dimension to mutual recognition (Taylor 1994; Rockefeller 1994). In a community of practice where diversity is central, mutual recognition should include recognition of communal diversity (Parekh 2000: 4) and hence human equality. Negative stereotypes of social groups may be harmful to how participation is understood in a community of practice (*cf.* Young 1997: 389; Taylor 1994: 105). In terms of the values that direct the activities of a community of practice, mutuality must be underscored by equality (*cf.* 1.9.3 (i)).

3.5.4 The influences of socio-cultural contexts on knowledge creation in communities of practice

Roberts (2006: 629) points out an important issue which I have found to be particularly relevant to knowledge creation in communities of practice in which diversity is a key component. The present study is based on the assumption that in learning for diversity, the socio-cultural contexts of teachers will be a factor that will influence their predisposition towards learning for Citizenship education/Religion education (*cf.* Taylor 2009: 4) (*cf*. 6.4). Roberts raises the problem of how members' predispositions influence the "absorption and creation of knowledge and the negotiation of particular types of meaning to the detriment of other possible interpretations" (Roberts 2006: 629). This situation may be exacerbated by members' socio-cultural contexts (ibid: 629, 634). In the light of the above, communities of practice theory does not offer suggestions as to how members of a practice critically examine the influences of their socio-cultural contexts on their practice (*cf.* Roberts 2006:630; Mezirow 2009: 20, 22).

Roberts' (2006) observation aligns with Mezirow's (2000: 31) theory that a person's frame of reference or habitual ways of thinking (3.2.3.1) influence his/her disposition towards learning. A person's frame of reference could therefore influence how a member of a community of practice

takes up “new” knowledge and contributes towards creating knowledge pertaining to the domain (*cf.* Wenger 1998: 214) (Mezirow 2000: 31) (3.2). To add to this, a problem associated with learning “about” and “for” diversity lies with members’ harbouring inaccurate interpretations of social groups shaped by their social-historical contexts and predispositions. If members are predisposed towards diversity in deficit terms, influenced by their socio-cultural contexts, the community of practice may be in danger of becoming “locked into itself”, as was suggested in 3.5.1 above (Wenger *et al* 2002: 139).

3.5.5 Power relations in communities of practice

Power relations in communities of practice should be seen in relation to the influences of socio-cultural contexts and predispositions on defining participation. It seems that power relations in a community of practice are in jeopardy of being overlooked when the community concept is romanticised as depicting situations of harmony and peace (*cf.* 3.5.1). Although communities of practice present opportunities for knowledge creation, power relations are a reality that cannot be ignored. As Wenger suggests, they make a difference to whether or not interpretations gain legitimacy in the learning experience (Wenger 2006b: 16, 18). In this sense, power in social learning systems does not necessarily mean “evil or dominating” (Wenger 2006b: 18). I would argue, however, that although there is some truth in Wenger’s claim regarding the meaning of power, we cannot ignore the realities that power as dominance and exclusion carry with it, particularly when social justice issues are at stake.

Wenger (1998: 207) also suggests that power in a community of practice has a dual nature: it may be a catalyst in creating tension that leads to negotiation, or it may result in hegemony and the perpetuation of authoritarian ideas. In this latter sense, Handley *et al* (2006: 644) concurs that power in the hands of established, more powerful practitioners in the community may be responsible for perpetuating an “exclusionary dominant discourse”, which in turn prevents full participation by newcomers to the community. I would take this argument a step further, however, to suggest that disequilibrium in power relations in communities of practice may be perpetuated by members who capitulate to tradition or beliefs pertaining to gender, sexual orientation, and minority religious or cultural groups (*cf.* Mattson & Harley 2003: 288) (2.2.2). Should imbalances of power be permitted, “negotiation of meaning” becomes merely a reflection of the dominant voices in the community of practice (Roberts 2006: 627). The question that arises then is whether or not such a “community” qualifies as a community of practice at all.

Awareness of the dynamics of identity-development and forms of participation is critical, since these dynamics are likely to influence the ways in which individuals internalise or are prepared to challenge or reject the existing practices of their community or in defining the practices of a new community (Handley *et al* 2006: 644; Roberts 2006: 627).

3.5.6 Communities of practice across time and space

Maintaining communities of practice across time and space is a challenge for any institution in which they feature as tools for knowledge creation and management. This point is particularly pertinent to large-scale social learning systems (Wenger 2006b: 16). Accordingly, the structural conditions necessary for members of communities of practice to communicate regularly include finding the time to meet and the physical proximity to one another. Maintaining communities of practice amongst teachers in a particular school, or amongst groups of teachers from schools in a district is far easier than attempting to set them up and maintain them on a national scale. Furthermore, successful communities of practice require a degree of trust and mutual understanding, which take time to develop (Roberts 2006: 633; *cf.* Taylor 2009: 13) (3.2.3.4). While establishing communities of practice presents a useful option for teacher professional development, the remoteness of rural areas, exacerbated by a lack of resources in many schools, conflicting cultural values and political ideals, may place this option out of the reach of many teachers in South Africa. Moreover, the community of practice is a first-world concept, which may not be easily realised in developing countries. Further discussion of this point occurs in Chapter 7.

3.5.7 Where did the 'master' go?

On the grounds that uncertainty around the effectiveness of Citizenship education in South Africa prevails (*cf.* Ramphele 2010; Jansen 2010; Enslin 2003: 74) (1.3), a community of practice approach requires innovative, knowledgeable and competent educators who function as the 'catalysts' or agents of the transformative thinking explicitly stipulated in the NCS (DoE 2003b: 11).

Lave & Wenger (1991; 1999: 22ff) were originally inspired by the learning that occurs between masters and their apprentices in communities of practice (3.3). Learning occurs through the effective circulation of knowledge and information through the community, from "the master", through various knowledgeable peers, to those on the periphery who are less experienced. In Lave & Wenger (1991) and Wenger's (1998) more recent work, the "master" seems to disappear in favour of "mastery" or the emphasis on "the organization of the community of practice of which the master is a part" (Lave & Wenger 1999: 23). Wenger (2006b: 28) refers to "horizontal learning" to capture the direction that learning should take. However, a question that arises in relation to this notion is related to the origins of the source/s of knowledge and the influences of more knowledgeable mentors (Mezirow 1991: 206, Mandell & Herman 2009: 79) (*cf.* 3.2.3.5), whose role it might be to inject new ideas or mediate learning in the community of practice. This observation suggests that there continues to be a place for "vertical learning" (Wenger 2006b: 28) alongside "horizontal learning". "Knowledgeable others" (Dowson 2007: 93) or mentors cannot, however, resort to ideological or theological dominance, but ought to ensure that a democratic disposition prevails in the community of practice (Mezirow 1991: 206) (*cf*. Chapters 6 and 7).

3.6 SUMMARY AND REFLECTIONS ON THE CHAPTER

In constructing the theoretical frame for teacher-learning for Citizenship education/Religion education, an approach conducive to teacher development for democratic Citizenship education is posited in this chapter. Learning to teach for democracy in a pluralist society requires that teachers learn in situations that allow them to acquire the values, content knowledge and skills of living together anticipated of school-based learners in the NCS. To this end, a possible synthesis of transformative learning theory and communities of practice theory has been explored, with principles of critical multicultural education and deliberative democracy.

A goal of transformative learning is to expand teachers' ability to think critically, reflectively and to engage dialogically about controversial contemporary issues that stem from the gender, race, class, ethnic and religious differences that pervade society (Mezirow 2000: 31; Nussbaum 1997: 73; *cf*. Slattery 2006). The community of practice concept is hence posited as a locus for maximising the goals of transformative learning and for "learning in practice" as an option for more effective teacher-learning and development (2.2 (iv, v, vi) (*cf.* Mezirow 1991: 207; Wenger 1998: 95). Critical multicultural education draws attention to cultural and religious diversity in pluralist societies and the significance of developing thoughtful and active citizens who exhibit positive attitudes and behaviours towards people from different backgrounds (Banks 2002: 136, 137). The principles of deliberative democracy theory, applied to education, provide the guidelines for engaging teachers in learning democratic processes. Democracy theory of the communicative type, such as that propagated by Young (2000: 70, 71), also contributes to knowing what it means to teach for social justice, viz. with guiding teachers to be inclusive of varying perspectives, rights, interests, needs and worldviews (*cf.* Cochran-Smith 2004: 70; Nieto 2000: 315). The emphasis on engaging in democratic discourse in communities provides the means to deal with the tensions associated with living in a pluralist society in a reasonable way (Young 2000: 24).

The empirical phase of this study is presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, in which the applicability of the theoretical framework as it has been reviewed will be investigated.

CHAPTER 4

THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCESS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

A detailed account of the research design and process and the data analysis techniques as these were envisaged and implemented for the empirical study are presented in this chapter. A mixed methods approach to the empirical study was anticipated as being appropriate to investigating the extent of teacher knowledge for Life Orientation generally and teacher participation in a community of practice for Citizenship education/Religion education specifically (1. 3). The research design was informed by the theoretical framework that guided this study, viz. transformative learning theory (Mezirow 1991; Mezirow & Associates 2000), Wenger's communities of practice theory (Wenger 1998, 2006b) and principles of deliberative democracy and critical multicultural education as discussed in Chapter 3.

The following are presented and delineated in this chapter:

- The integrating framework for mixed methods research with particular reference to this study;
- The rationale for the sequential transformative design: the cross-sectional survey followed by participatory action research;
- The design and purpose of the cross-sectional survey;
- The design and outline of the procedures undertaken in the participatory action research phase;
- The data analysis methods and techniques as these pertain to the research process;
- A summary and reflections on the chapter.

4.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN: MIXED METHODS

4.2.1 An integrating framework for mixed methods research

The empirical phase of this study was conducted using a mixed methods[21] approach in the form of a sequential transformative design (Creswell 2003: 216), viz. a cross-sectional survey, followed by a period of participatory action research (hereafter referred to using the acronym PAR).

[21] The work of Creswell (2003), Creswell & Plano Clark (2007), Tashakkori & Teddlie (1998), Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) and Mertens (2009) mainly, are the sources for this mixed methods design.

Mixed methods research has been defined as the "class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004: 17; *cf.* Creswell & Plano Clark 2007: 7; Denscombe 2007: 108). The value of mixed methods for this study was associated with viewing the unit of analysis from more than one perspective (Denscombe 2007: 108, 134; Creswell & Plano Clarke 2007: 135). Furthermore, the "mixing" of quantitative and qualitative data was deemed necessary for forming a more complete picture of the research problem than if only one or the other had been implemented (Creswell 2003:15, 21; Creswell & Plano Clark 2007: 5, 7; Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998: 43) (*cf.* 4.2.2).

On the grounds that education is a social practice, I anticipated that quantitative methods only would be limiting in my attempt to ascertain how teachers engage with their world and make sense of it. Yet the survey data provided a more global perspective of the research problem than the qualitative data alone would have provided. By means of the qualitative phase I sought to understand the context or setting of a few of the participants through engagement with them in their contexts and by gathering information in person (Creswell 2003: 9; Denzin & Lincoln 2000: 3; Miles & Huberman 1994: 10).

4.2.2 The philosophical assumptions (paradigm) associated with mixed methods

Mixed methods research takes pragmatism as its philosophical foundation (Denscombe 2007: 108; Creswell 2003: 6, 21; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004: 16). Pragmatism draws on the ideas of the classical pragmatists such as Dewey, James and Peirce who contended that "knowledge claims arise out of actions, situations and consequences, rather than antecedent conditions" as in postpositivism (Creswell & Plano Clark 2007: 26; Creswell 2003: 11). The value of a pragmatic paradigm for this study was associated with its not being committed to any one reality, but rather with "what works" (Creswell 2003: 11, 12), valuing both objective and subjective knowledge (Creswell & Plano Clark 2007: 26; Punch 2009: 291). Pragmatism considers the research question or problem to be more important than either the methods used or the worldview that underlies the methods. For this reason mixed methods research draws liberally from both quantitative (usually objective) and qualitative (usually subjective) paradigms. These are meant to work together to provide a better understanding of a research problem than perhaps a mono-method approach would have done (Denscombe 2007: 109; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004: 15; Creswell 2003: 12, 18).

Since pragmatism helps to shed light on how pluralist approaches to research can be mixed effectively (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004: 16), I have positioned myself within a pragmatist worldview to answer the research questions associated with this study (1.5). Hence, I have drawn on objective knowledge claims, associated with the data collected from the survey or quantitative

phase of the study, and subjective knowledge claims associated with the social constructivist knowledge claims that underpinned the PAR or qualitative phase of the study. Constructivist knowledge claims are associated with the desire to understand the complexity of views that contribute towards a situation in close interaction with research participants (Denzin & Lincoln 2000: 3; Reason & Bradbury 2006: 7). Qualitative research relies largely on the participants' views of the situation being studied since these are formed within social contexts (Creswell 2003: 8). This perspective resonates therefore with the pragmatist viewpoint that "knowledge claims arise out of actions, situations and consequences" (ibid: 11; Creswell & Plano Clark 2007: 23).

The survey conducted as the first phase of this research provided numbers and words ("within-stage" mixed methods, *cf.* Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004: 20); and the PAR provided the words forged in close association with the participants over a period of time. The qualitative phase was essentially constructivist *and* participatory, since this research was largely oriented towards action and transformation (4.4.2) (Taylor 2009; Mertens 2009: 2ff; Creswell 2003: 216).

4.2.3 The sequential transformative strategy and data collection methods in the mixed methods design

Creswell (2003: 13) refers to the choice of research design for a project as the "strategy of inquiry". A sequential strategy of inquiry is characterised by two distinct phases of data collection in which priority may be given to either the quantitative or the qualitative phases, or both phases could be given equal status (Creswell 2003: 212; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004: 22). Integral to mixed methods is that the two types of data need to be integrated at various stages of the research process, or the results of the two phases need to be integrated during the interpretation phase so that together they form a more complete picture of the research problem (4.2.2) (Creswell & Plano Clark 2007: 7).

The sequential approach to this study entailed implementing the quantitative phase first (QUAN) (Figure 4.1) in the form of the cross-sectional survey, followed by the qualitative phase (QUAL) in the form of the PAR cyclical stages (Kemmis & McTaggart 2000: 596; Chiu 2003: 166; Mertens 2009: 141). The purpose of sequencing the QUAN and QUAL in this study was so that the results from the one method (the survey) would inform the processes of the other method (PAR) (Creswell 2003: 15, 16; *cf.* Mertens 2009: 182). The qualitative data helped to explain and add to the quantitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark 2007: 71). The PAR phase comprised the fieldwork in which multiple qualitative research methods were used, viz. focus group interviews / discussions (Stewart & Shamdasani 1990; Chiu 2003: 170), classroom observation and face-to-face semi-structured interviews, in that order.

To elaborate on the type of sequential strategy, a sequential *transformative* strategy was implemented (Creswell 2003: 216; Mertens 2009: 166ff). This approach shares with other sequential approaches the two distinct phases of data collection as previously noted. A transformative strategy, however, according to Creswell (2003: 216), includes a theoretical perspective to guide the research process. Creswell (ibid) maintains that the data collection methods alone in a mixed methods design may be inadequate for addressing the research questions. For this reason the QUAN → QUAL sequence (4.2.4) was guided by the key concepts of the theoretical framework, viz. transformative learning and community of practice theory, to give substance to the design process for this study (Creswell 2003: 213; Mertens 2009: 167, 182).

In relation to the research design, the theory is envisaged as contributing to *transformation* or *change* in teacher development initiatives and teacher perceptions of Citizenship education /Religion education. The transformative framework as a whole appealed specifically to the PAR which, as Mertens (2009: 182) points out, is not merely a research methodology, but a "philosophy of life" that could change participants' thinking towards the inquiry process and assist them "to participate in the decisions that affect their lives" (ibid: 182). The emphasis on the participatory worldview in the PAR phase is discussed more fully in section 4.4 of this chapter (*cf.* 6.4).

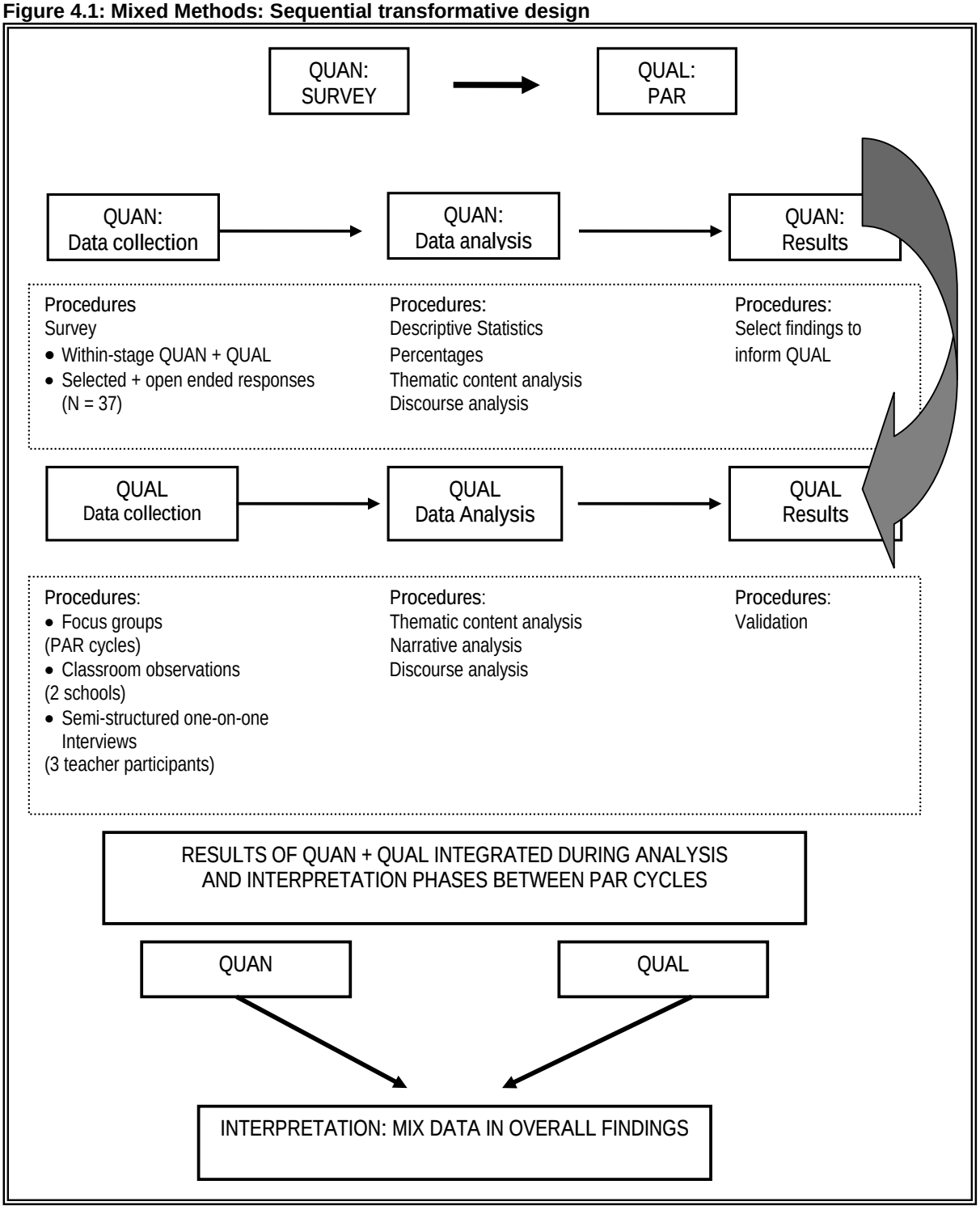
4.2.4 A summary of the sequential transformative strategy: a visual diagram

Each of the phases, quantitative followed by qualitative (QUAN → QUAL) (Figure 4.1), was assigned equal status in terms of addressing the research problem (*cf.* 1.3). The responses from the survey would provide information about a cross-section of Life Orientation teachers, pertaining to how they had acquired knowledge about diverse religions and beliefs and their understanding of Citizenship education/Religion education. On another level, however, the survey could assist in identifying the gaps in teachers' content knowledge of both Citizenship education (1.8.3) and Religion education (1.8.4). The survey data could potentially provide some direction regarding the reflective, cyclical stages of the PAR phase (4.4.2; 6.4) (Mertens 2009: 268).

A visual diagram of the sequential transformative design as it was formulated for this research is presented in Figure 4.1. The visual diagram provides a global picture of the research design for this study: from survey through the PAR stages with the relevant data collection methods. It is in keeping with the visual diagrams and notation system used to explain the use of mixed methods research propounded by Creswell & Plano Clark (2007: 40, 41) (*cf.* Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998: 43). These are the tools which enable the researcher to communicate the design features of mixed methods research.[22]

[22] The notation comprises +, to indicate methods that occur at the same time:→ in a sequence. The status of the method is indicated using either capital letters or lower casing. Hence, QUAN → QUAL indicates equal status of the two approaches.

Figure 4.1: Mixed Methods: Sequential transformative design



4.3 THE QUANTITATIVE PHASE IN THE MIXED METHODS PROCESS

4.3.1 The purpose of the cross-sectional survey in the sequential transformative strategy

The survey constituted the first phase in the QUAN → QUAL sequence of data collection (Figure 4.1) and must be seen in relation to the QUAL phase that followed. The survey was conducted in secondary schools in the Johannesburg area in the Gauteng province, South Africa.

The survey was designed to obtain a quantitative or numeric description of how members of a population of Life Orientation teachers are distributed across numerous variables which have bearing on teaching and learning Citizenship education/Religion Education (*cf.* Creswell 2003: 53; Gay & Airasian 2003: 10). These are the specific independent variables that were worked into the questions in the survey questionnaire (question numbers indicated in brackets) (*cf.* 4.3.1; 4.3.3.2):

- Age-group of respondents (SQ 1);
- Religious affiliation, worldview or spiritual orientation of respondents (SQ 4);
- Qualifications in relation to Life Orientation (undergraduate and postgraduate) (SQ 5);
- Courses completed in religion in undergraduate / postgraduate studies (SQ 7);
- Attendance at DoE-initiated INSET programmes for FET Life Orientation teachers (SQ 9).

The dependent variable was the following:

- Teachers feeling prepared to manage teaching and learning about different religions and cultures in Life Orientation (SQ. 7.1.4, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14).

Hence, I attempted to establish the following by means of the survey questionnaire:

- If there is a correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable (Fraenkel & Wallen 2004: 397; Denscombe 2007: 253). For example, the correlation between age of teachers and attitudes towards teaching and learning religious and cultural diversity (against the background of their initial teacher training); the correlation between qualifications and/or INSET and perceptions of competence in relation to Citizenship education/Religion education in Life Orientation.
- If trends, patterns and attitudes are evident in the views of teachers towards teaching Life Orientation in general and Citizenship education/Religion education more specifically.
- The extent to which the original and/or further qualifications of teachers of Life Orientation are consistent with the professional knowledge base required for Citizenship education/ Religion education (1. 3);

- The extent to which INSET programmes had contributed towards improving the professional knowledge base of teachers for the complexities of Citizenship education/ Religion education (1.3; 1.8.5).

It must be noted that the survey was designed against the background of South Africa's social and political history, since concepts such as 'teacher education', 'citizenship', 'Religion education' and 'diversity' in relation to transformation in the national curriculum, cannot really be understood otherwise (*cf.* 2.2.2) (DoE 2003a). The 'transformative' in this mixed methods approach is associated with change in the way in which teachers think about diversity, citizenship education and religion, and how change is infused into practice.

Fraenkel & Wallen (2004: 399) point out that the target population in a survey must be well defined. In this research, the target population was secondary-school Life Orientation teachers. The main criterion that participants had to fulfil in order to be considered for the sample was that they were teachers of Life Orientation in the FET band (Grades 10-12) at the time that the survey was undertaken. The survey was cross-sectional since it was conducted within a specified period of time, viz. a three-week period in August/September 2007.

4.3.2 Sample selection: purposive sampling

According to Cohen & Manion (1994: 86), an integral aspect of survey research is the population upon which the survey is focused. In this study, a purposive sampling strategy was implemented as a form of non-probability sampling since the cases (Life Orientation teachers) would be regarded as being typical of the topic of interest in the research (Cohen & Manion 1994: 89), but not necessarily representative of the population as a whole. On the grounds that religious and cultural diversity is a key issue in this study, and given the diverse nature of the beliefs, values and worldviews held in South African society in general, it might not be possible to generalise all of the findings from this sample to the population. Nevertheless, it might be possible to determine general principles for Citizenship education/Religion education practice from the sample that could be generalised to the population (*cf.* De Vaus 1996: 78).

For the purposes of this research, a university-generated[23] list of secondary schools in the Gauteng province was used as a sampling frame from which schools were identified. Schools were then purposively selected so that a reasonable spread of schools across thirteen districts

[23] 'University-generated' list means that lists of schools had been generated by the Teaching Experience department of the School of Education: University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. The lists comprise names and addresses of schools to which pre-service teacher education students are sent for their teaching experiences.

(excluding the four Tshwane districts[24]) would be included in the sample. Sixty schools were selected to make up the sample. The schools were selected in such a way that the complexity of diversity in the Gauteng province would be reflected. The urban experience in terms of the nature and extent of socio-economic, religious and cultural diversity in schools (in Johannesburg and surrounds) is of particular interest to addressing the research question a fact which needed to be reflected in the sampling. Included were inner-city schools (in Johannesburg), suburban schools (across the districts) and township schools in areas which, during the apartheid era, would have been designated according to the Population Register (Christie 1991: 139) as black, coloured and Asian[25]. University teacher education students were called upon to assist as fieldworkers to deliver the questionnaires to schools in person and to take responsibility for their collection on completion by a given date. I used this method of distribution and collection as I assumed that it would ensure a high response rate. However, a large number of the student fieldworkers reported problems when attempting to retrieve the questionnaires. In some cases, I delivered and collected the surveys in person. In other cases, surveys were sent to schools by mail in order to widen the sample. Very few questionnaires were returned by mail.

Rural schools were not included in this study and could be the subject of a separate study (*cf.* 7.4.3).

4.3.3 The survey instrument: a self-administered questionnaire (QUAN)

4.3.3.1 The design of the survey questionnaire

A self-administered questionnaire (Appendix IIb) was designed as the research instrument to collect data for the QUAN phase of this inquiry (*cf.* Figure 4.1). Both closed- and open-ended questions were formulated in the research instrument (within-stage mixed methods) so that frequencies in relation to certain aspects of the research question could be determined. The open-ended questions were formulated to add meaning to the numbers generated from the closed questions and also to determine the patterns or trends that would be developed in the PAR (QUAL) phase of the study (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004: 21).

Closed-ended questions required teachers to respond to selected responses, viz. *YES, NO* and *UNSURE*. Open-ended questions were in some cases attached to the selected responses so that participants could elaborate by giving reasons or examples, or express their particular views on including topics on religious and cultural diversity in Life Orientation.

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[24] The other four districts are situated in Tshwane and could not be included as these were outside the range of where students were sent on their school experiences and hence did not appear on the university lists.

[25] The appellations ‘black’, ‘white’, ‘coloured’ and ‘Asian’ or ‘Indian’ have not been used in a derogatory or labelling sense in this study. These were used in the Population Registration of the apartheid era and continue to be used in defining the various groups in South Africa. In this study these appellations are used to affirm diversity.

The questionnaire was divided into two main categories:

- Biographical information of the respondents (Section A of the questionnaire)
- Policy and curriculum information (Section B of the questionnaire).

4.3.3.2 The rationale behind the categories of questions in the survey questionnaire

(i) Biographical Information (Section A)

Questions 1 to 7 in the survey questionnaire are the subject descriptors. Responses to these questions provided descriptions of each of the respondents (referred to as "observations") who completed the survey questionnaire. These questions were formulated to elicit the following information**:**

- Age-group (SQ 1);
- Home language (SQ 2);
- Sex (SQ 3);
- Religion or spiritual orientation (if any) (SQ 4);
- Highest academic qualifications (SQ 5);
- The district in which the respondent's school is situated (SQ 6);
- Whether courses in undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications had included religious studies of any type (SQ 7).

Four of the questions (SQ 1, 2, 3 and 6) required selected responses (Gillham 2000: 28) whereby respondents marked their selections from a list provided in the questionnaire. Two of the six questions were formulated as open-ended questions, since respondents were required to state their religious affiliation or spiritual orientation (SQ 4) and highest academic qualifications achieved (SQ 5).

The question, "Did you complete any courses or modules to do with religion in your initial undergraduate courses" (SQ 7, 7.1) and/or post graduate courses (SQ 7.2) was a multilayered question. This question was formulated to determine whether or not respondents perceived themselves as being adequately prepared to manage teaching and learning about diverse religions and cultures as a result of courses undertaken in initial higher diplomas or education degrees (*cf.* 2.2.2; 2.2.3).

(ii) Age-group categories

The age-group categories provided in the questionnaire were based on the year 1994 as the point of departure, viz. the year of South Africa's first democratic elections. The reason for creating these categories was to determine whether the age and socialization of respondents in relation to South

Africa's social-political history would influence how teachers relate to the contents of Citizenship education with Religion education as defined in the National Curriculum Statements (DoE 2002: 4, 9, 25; 2003a: 11). A profile of each age-group category has been compiled, based on historical developments in South Africa.

Age-group category 21 to 30 years

Respondents were aged between nine and 17 years of age in 1994, or would have been in Grades 3 to 11. Respondents in this age-group category may have experienced some form of desegregated schooling with the introduction of the "Clase Models" (Christie 1995: 49)[26], depending on where they attended school. It is possible that they may still have attended racially segregated schools. Respondents may have had some exposure to religious and cultural diversity, although it is more than likely that Christian or Bible Education prevailed in the schools that they attended, i.e. in white, black and coloured schools. Respondents of Asian or Indian origin may have attended "Right Living"[27] classes, the name of the moral education type subject that was introduced for all learners in historically Indian schools from 1966 (Tate 1995: 13).

Age-group category 31 to 39 years

Respondents were aged between 18 and 26 years of age in 1994, as pre-service teachers at college of education or a university, or in the first few years of employment. If respondents were aged between 18 and 21 in 1994, they may have experienced the first stages of desegregated schooling from 1990 to 1994. However, those at the upper end of the age-group category (viz. 35 to 39 years) would have been subjected to apartheid education. For some, the first exposure to diversity may have been in colleges of education or at a university, although this would also have depended on the "race" of the respondent and the college of education or university attended. In state schools during the apartheid era, Religious education was influenced by Christian National Education (CNE) (Malherbe 1977; Christie 1991: 179ff) which may or may not have continued to influence teachers towards religious diversity in the Life Orientation curriculum.

Age-group category 40 to 49 years

Respondents were aged between 27 and 36 years of age in 1994 and would in all likelihood have been trained in segregated institutions. These respondents would also have been subjected to apartheid education and the principles of CNE if they attended school in South Africa. Teachers in this age-group category would also have taught in a segregated schooling system entrenched in racial inequality (Christie 1995: 46). Their teacher qualifications would in all likelihood reflect the

[26] In September 1990, the desegregation of White state schools was initiated by the South African government by means of the so-called "Clase Models" (named after the Minister of Education at the time, Piet Clase).

[27] The teaching of religion in Indian education needed to consider Hinduism and Islam in addition to Christianity. Tate (1995: 15) points out that Right Living "represented the most creative attempt in the (apartheid) state school system to cope with religious pluralism".

kinds of opportunities not necessarily available to different “races” in teacher education institutions at the time (the 1970’s and 1980’s). In some universities and all white colleges of education, Christian Religious education was taught as a compulsory subject. Only Biblical Studies, and not Religious Studies, was recognised as a school subject in public schools even though Religious Studies was taught as a major subject in some universities.

Age-group 50 years and older

Respondents were aged between 37 years of age and over in 1994. As with the previous category, they would have been subjected to CNE and would have experienced segregated schooling at learner level and as qualified teachers. The comments regarding Religious education and Biblical Studies made in the 40 to 49 years of age category would apply to the respondents in this category as well.

(iii) Formulation of the Policy and Curriculum section of the questionnaire (Section B)

This section of the survey questionnaire consisted of Questions 8 to 14. For clarity, each question will be cited and thereafter an explanation for its formulation and inclusion in the questionnaire will follow.

Question 8: How familiar are you with the National Policy on Religion and Education?

Question 8 was included to determine how familiar teachers are with public policy on the place of religion in education. This question included four selected responses, followed by an open-ended option. The selected responses included the following:

- I have not heard of the policy.
- I know of the policy, but haven’t as yet read it.
- I have read the policy, I am familiar with its contents, but don’t apply the contents in my teaching.
- I am very familiar with the contents and apply them in my teaching.

Question 9: Have you attended any in-service training workshops in preparation for teaching Life Orientation Grades 10-12?

Question 9 was a multilayered question formulated to determine if respondents had attended any of the INSET sessions between 2004 and 2007 in preparation for the introduction of Life Orientation into the FET band, the kinds of topics that had been included and if teachers felt adequately prepared to teach Life Orientation in general (SQ 9.3)**.** SQ 9.2 was included to determine whether or not Citizenship education had been included as a topic in INSET programmes. SQ 9.4 required respondents to indicate whether or not units on diverse religions and cultures had been included in the INSET workshops that they had attended (DoE 2003a: 11, 25).

To obtain committed responses to the various layers of Question 9, a selected response option was provided: *YES* or *NO* (SQ 9, 9.3), or, *YES*, *NO*, *UNSURE* (SQ 9.4), followed by an open-ended response option.

SQ 10, 11 and 12 are related to one another. These were formulated to build on one another as well as onto SQ 9.4.

Question 10: How do you feel about including topics or themes on diverse religions and cultures in your Grade 10 and 11 Life Orientation lessons?

SQ 10 was an open-ended question and sought to determine teacher opinions on including topics on diversity in general without necessarily being personally responsible for learning and teaching. This question was included to determine if a correlation exists between the age-group categories of respondents and their attitude towards including Religion education content in Life Orientation.

Question 11: Do you think that you have the knowledge and skills to include topics relating to diverse religions and cultures in your Life Orientation lessons?

SQ 11 included selected responses: *YES*, *NO* or *UNSURE*. This question was formulated to build on SQ 10 and required teachers to be more specific about their own knowledge base regarding religious and cultural diversity.

Question 12: Do you believe that you have the knowledge and skills to handle discussions or debates on controversial religious or cultural issues in your Life Orientation classes?

SQ 12 also included selected responses: *YES*, *NO* or *UNSURE*. Building on SQ 10 and SQ 11, teachers were required to indicate their levels of preparedness to consciously include controversial issues or topics in Life Orientation classes.

The responses to SQ 10, 11 and 12 would be analysed to determine if a correlation was evident with SQ 9.4, viz. whether respondents were confident or felt knowledgeable enough to include topics on diverse religions and cultures, *because* the INSET programmes had provided adequate information and training to do with religious and cultural diversity. Responses to these questions would also be followed up in the PAR cyclical stages.

Question 13: Have you included, or do you plan to include topics on diverse religions and cultures in your Grade 10 and/or 11 Life Orientation learning programmes in 2007?

SQ 13 was also a multilayered question which first required a selected response, *YES* or *NO*, followed by explanations of the selected responses.

Question 14: Would you like to have assistance with improving your knowledge of diverse religions and cultures in order to teach these sections in the NCS well?

SQ 14 was a multilayered question with selected responses, *YES* or *NO*. Thereafter respondents were required to explain their *YES* (SQ 14.1) or *NO* (SQ 14.2) responses. Positive answers would be sought to establish the content knowledge that teachers believed they required and negative responses in terms of what these might have indicated in terms of decisions to exclude diverse religions and cultures.

4.4 FROM QUANTITATIVE TO QUALITATIVE

4.4.1 The qualitative dimension of the sequential transformative strategy

The survey questionnaire conducted in 2007 was followed by the PAR phase in 2008. The QUAL phase allowed for follow-up on the survey findings with participants in a more personal way, to probe for more in-depth and contextual interpretations of the survey questionnaire, thereby contributing to the flow of the research process from QUAN (survey questionnaire) to QUAL (PAR) (*cf.* Figure 4.1). One reason for selecting PAR for the second phase was associated with the idea that action research is concerned with diagnosing a problem in a specific context and attempting to solve it in that context (Cohen & Manion 1994: 186; Reason & Bradbury 2006:1). This could not have been achieved without the participation of Life Orientation teachers for whom teaching for diversity and democratic values had been under-explored in INSET programmes (*cf.* 5.4).

Collectively, the findings in the survey were useful in defining the nature and scope of the process of co-operative inquiry in the PAR phase (Cohen & Manion 1994: 198; Creswell 2003: 33; Punch 2009: 293). The findings were also used to formulate the interview guides for the focus group discussions and the topics for discussion in the cyclical stages in the PAR phase (*cf.* 4.4.2) (Figure 4.2). The design of the PAR process as qualitative research follows in the next section.

4.4.2 Participatory Action Research as qualitative research

Reason and Bradbury (2006: xxiv; *cf.* Punch 2009: 135) maintain that action research overlaps significantly with qualitative research. Action researchers often design their projects in ways that are similar to qualitative designs which are “field-based, longitudinal and engaged” (ibid). For this reason multiple data collection methods may be used, which was the case for this research (*cf.* 4.2.3). Focus group interviews/discussions, classroom observation and face-to-face semi-structured interviews were used as the primary data collection methods.

More specifically PAR has been defined as an approach to research in which researcher and participants are seen to be co-researchers in collaboration with one another (*cf.* Reason & Bradbury 2006: xxv). Action research is grounded in a participatory worldview and as Heron and

Reason (2006: 144) point out, is conducted "*with* people rather than *on* people", as all participants become agents in the research process, engaging in "mutual sense-making and collective action" (Reason & Bradbury 2006: 2). For these reasons and because PAR entails a democratic process (ibid: 10; Denscombe 2007: 127), it was deemed to be an appropriate research strategy for this study. PAR is an approach to research that affirms the equal status of participants and recognises their varied abilities to have a say in decisions which affect them (Reason & Bradbury 2006: 10; Mertens 2009: 2, 183) (*cf.* 1.9.3; 2.2.3). These PAR values are in keeping with the democratic values ascribed to Citizenship education/Religion education, discussed at length in Chapter 1.

The PAR process proceeded through cycles, involving a spiral of self-reflective stages. According to Kemmis and McTaggart (2000: 596) and Wadsworth (1998: 5), the stages include planning, usually to initiate change; acting on, and observing the process and consequences of the anticipated change; reflecting on these processes and consequences, and thereafter re-planning, acting, observing, reflecting and so on (Cohen *et al* 2000: 236; Denscombe 2007: 126). The stages have been outlined below as they were conceived of before the start of the project (see also Figure 4.2):

Stage 1: Introduction to the project and planning for future meetings

This stage would entail an introduction to the research, including a start-up workshop held with the participant teachers in which the purposes of the study would be outlined, viz:

- The aims of the proposed study, including concepts and approaches to teaching and learning about the diversity of religions and cultures as an aspect of Citizenship education (DoE 2003a).
- Feedback to the participants on the relevant survey findings.
- An exposition of participatory action research as a research genre and the teachers' role in the cyclical process as co-researchers.
- The concept of a community of practice as a context in which PAR could be operationalised.
- A focus group interview (*cf.* Appendix IV; FGI 1, 6.4.1).

Stage 2: Planning and action

- A second focus group interview/discussion (*cf.* Appendix V; FGI 2, 6.4.2).
- The researcher establishes the extent of the teachers' knowledge of religious and cultural diversity in Life Orientation.
- The researcher investigates the teachers' perceptions of learning and teaching religion and cultural diversity within Citizenship education.

Stage 3: Reflection on action taken in the classroom, further action

- A third focus group interview/discussion (*cf.* 6.4.3.3).
- The teachers share personal narratives on classroom experiences of religious and cultural diversity.
- The teachers engage reflectively in discussing their own positions in relation to religious and cultural diversity and the meaning of tolerance.
- Input from the researcher on policies, including the *National Policy on Religion and Education* (DoE 2003b), the NCS (DoE 2003a) perspective on religion in education, declarations of human rights (The Bill of Rights in *the Constitution of South Africa*; *the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*).

Stage 4: Planning for practice

- A fourth focus group interview/discussion (*cf.* 6.4.4.2; 6.4.5).
- Planning for the researcher to visit schools and observe teacher participants in action in the classroom.
- Input from the researcher on various aspects of Citizenship education and democracy.

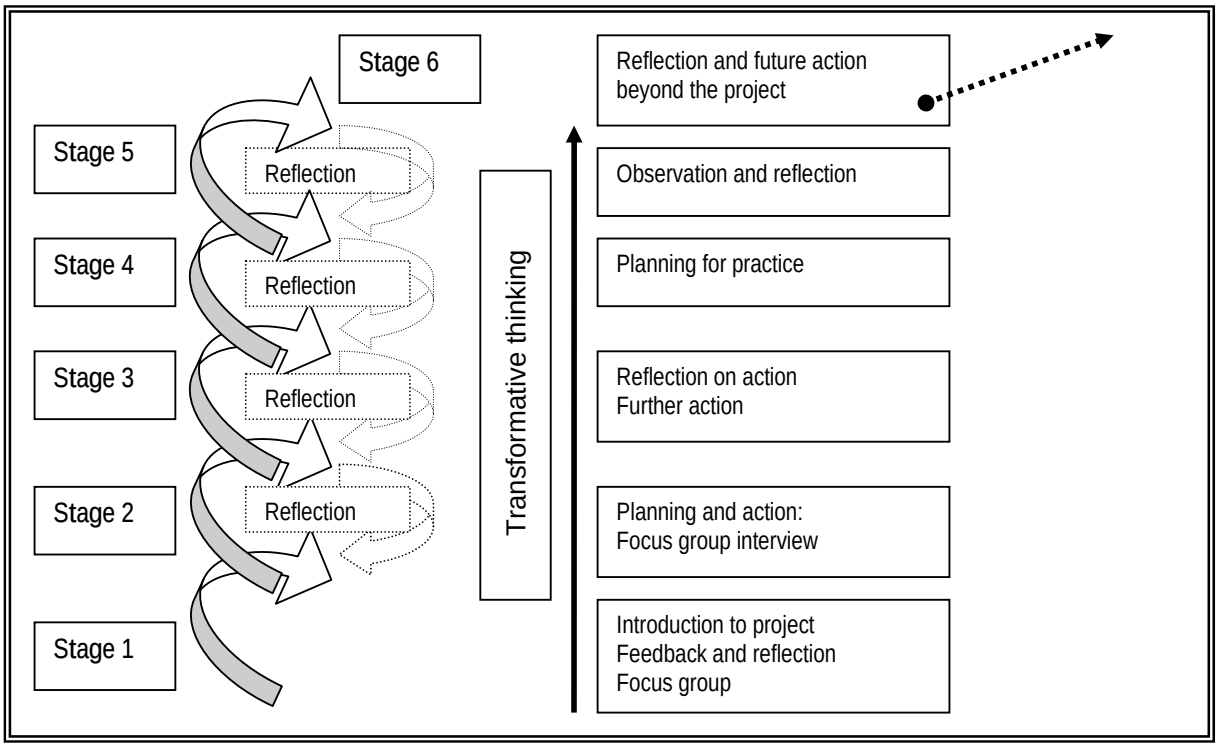
Stage 5: Observation and reflection

- Classroom observation by the researcher: teachers observed in action (*cf.* 6.4.6).
- Post-observation reflections in a focus group discussion.
- The data are transcribed and shared with the teacher-participants.

Stage 6: Reflection and future action

- One-to-one semi-structured interviews to allow each participant to reflect on the research process (*cf.* 6.4.7).
- The collation of field notes.
- A discussion of a way forward for each participant in relation to their school contexts.

Figure 4.2: Anticipated PAR cyclical stages



As can be noted from the diagrammatic representation of the PAR phase, reflection occurs at each stage of the cyclical process (Cohen *et al* 2000: 239). The cyclical process, however, as Kemmis and McTaggart (2000: 595) maintain, may not always be as neat as the spiral suggests. Rather, the stages may overlap and initial plans may change completely in the actual experience of the research. In reality, the process is likely to be more fluid and open to variation in response to the research situation. Kemmis and McTaggart (2000: 595) suggest, with reference to the cyclical stages of PAR, that: "the criterion of success is not whether participants have followed the steps faithfully, but whether they have a strong and authentic sense of development and evolution in their practices, their understanding of their practices and the situations of their practice." This point was particularly significant for this research, since, although the six stages, as outlined above, were carefully worked out prior to the commencement of the research, they turned out differently in practice (*cf.* 6.5). This was partly because the participants did not have a "strong and authentic sense of development and evolution in their practices" (ibid: 595), and partly because the rigours of daily life, professionally and privately, interrupted the anticipated planning of the PAR stages. The planning in each of the stages occurred more collaboratively with the participants than initially anticipated and far more realistically in conjunction with the actual circumstances of each of the participants. This reality will be described and commented upon in greater detail in the analysis of the data in Chapter 6.

4.4.3 Sampling for the purposes of the QUAL phase (PAR)

In order to conduct the qualitative phase, deliberate or purposive sampling (Creswell 2003: 220; Punch 2009: 252) was used to identify the sample for the study. Individuals were selected because they had experienced the central phenomenon associated with the study. Participants had to fulfil the criterion of being Life Orientation teachers in secondary schools. Volunteers were identified in one of the Gauteng districts by the Life Orientation subject advisor in that district. For ethical reasons the name of the particular district will not be disclosed. Initially the names of six teachers were received from the subject advisor for possible inclusion in the sample. After I had contacted all six volunteers by telephone, three of the volunteers eventually agreed to participate. One did not return the telephone calls, and the other two chose not to participate.

Initially, I anticipated that having only three participants in the PAR phase would place the validity of the study in question. However, small groups of participants in action research seem not to be unusual as confirmed by Reason & Bradbury (2006: xxii). These researchers maintain that action research which is quite small in scope can be significant, “through the personal reflection of one person on professional practice or through convening a few people to create and reflect on positive change” (ibid: xxii). Likewise, with regard to ethnographic research, Wolcott (1994: 180) argues that much can be gained from the study of one or two cases. The small sample allowed me to spend time with the three participants and I was therefore able to obtain in-depth, rich data from them (*cf*. Wolcott 1994: 183). According to Reason and Bradbury (2006: xxvii), leverage for desired change is more likely to occur at macro or institutional levels, but “conscious and intentional change” can also result from “the action research work of individual and committed groups” (ibid: xxvii) (*cf.* 4.4.2). For the reasons supplied by Reason and Bradbury and Wolcott, the decision was made to continue with the study with this small group (*cf.* Chapter 6).

4.4.4 Data collection methods in the PAR phase

The three data collection methods used in the PAR process were:

(i) focus group interviews/discussions;
(ii) classroom observation; and
(iii) semi-structured one-to-one interviews.

Each of these was used as the means for “driving” the PAR process.

4.4.4.1 Focus group interviews/discussions

It is important to note the links between the focus group as a data collection method and communities of practice. Participants in the focus groups constituted the community of practice. The key idea behind teacher-learning through participation in a community of practice would be

explored by adopting a research stance provided by PAR. In this phase of the study I fulfilled the dual role of mentor (Mezirow 1991: 207) and researcher, as I interviewed, observed and engaged reflexively with the data. On the grounds that the key idea in this study is associated with teachers acquiring knowledge for Citizenship education in communities of practice, focus group interviews were discursively oriented (Henning *et al* 2004: 57), to encourage "dialogic communicative action" (ibid), rather than the exchange of questions and answers characteristic of standardised interviews (Elliot 2005: 36; Jamieson & Williams 2003: 271). Furthermore, the focus groups provided the locus for the enactment of the mutual engagement (3.4.4.3) dimension of the community of practice.

Kvale's (1996: 2) description of the interview as a "construction site of knowledge" and as an "inter*View*", implying the interchange of ideas or views "between people conversing about a theme of mutual interest" (ibid), provided the guiding principle for interviewing in this research (*cf.* Jamieson & Williams 2003: 272). Moreover, the focus groups should be seen in the light of the survey conducted in the QUAN phase. The survey provided a general overview of the opinions and attitudes of a sample of Life Orientation teachers towards teaching and learning diverse religions, beliefs and cultures. Inter*Viewing* provided opportunities to probe more deeply into the particular opinions, attitudes and experiences of the participants in their social settings. Together, the researcher and participants would investigate how social settings could influence content knowledge and classroom practice for Citizenship education in the focus groups (Denscombe 2007: 174; Henning *et al* 2004: 5; Kvale 1996: 4) (*cf.* Mezirow 1991) (3.2.2). A point made by Warr (2005: 200) concerning the use of focus groups, particularly relevant for this study, is related to the idea that focus groups bring people from different social, religious and cultural backgrounds together to allow for "sociable interaction" as they share stories of their own personal histories (*cf*. Jamieson & Williams 2003: 273).

Each of the focus group discussions lasted approximately two hours. All focus groups were conducted at one or other of two of the schools (6.4.1.1, 6.4.3, 6.4.4). The group discussions were recorded and transcribed immediately after so that transcriptions could be presented to the participants for comment and follow-up in the next meeting of the community of practice. This sharing of the interview transcripts served as a means of validating the data.

The contents of the focus groups were used to motivate the observation phase (PAR Stage 5, 6.4.6) to draw attention to developing a sense of practice for Citizenship education/Religion education.

4.4.4.2 Participant Observation

Participant observation characterised the entire PAR phase, but was non-continuous (Fetterman 1998: 36) in that the participants were visited every few weeks over a period of time. As a data collection method, formal observation was confined to the time spent in classrooms in two of the schools in the fifth PAR stage (6.4.6). The value of observation for this research was as follows:

- Observation would provide the research with the inside or emic experience of the "culture" of the classroom (Denscombe 2007: 217; Fetterman 1998: 20), the domain of the teacher;
- Observation opened up the research to experiencing the extent of the teachers' knowledge base in action, including his/her pedagogical skills, and the learners' responses to topics on religious and cultural diversity from an etic perspective (outsider) as well (Fetterman 1998: 22);
- The researcher observations were followed up with post-observation discussions in which the teachers had opportunities to reflect critically on their approaches in the classroom, their knowledge of religious diversity and their use of learning support materials (*cf.* 6.4.6.6).

Hence, my observation of the participants in their classrooms was an extension of the dialogical communication and reflection that had been characteristic of the focus groups in the first four stages of the PAR process. In relation to the PAR cycles the observations of teachers at work in their classrooms and school environments provided material for further reflection, re-planning and further action.

Classroom activities were recorded digitally and also manually by means of extensive note taking. An observation schedule was prepared (6.4.6.2) to guide the fieldwork note taking.

4.4.4.3 Semi-structured one-to-one interviews

The interviewing in the final PAR stage (6.4.7) entailed face-to-face interchange with each participant (Kvale 1996: 5; Fetterman 1998: 37; Fontana & Frey 2000: 645). Where the focus group interviews gathered the participants in the research together to share opinions, the one-to-one interviews were concerned with the personal reflections of the participants on the entire research process which had taken place over an eight month period. The ethnographic slant to the project, contributed significantly to the success of these interviews in terms of the relationship that developed between participants and researcher (Fetterman 1998: 48; Fontana & Frey 2000: 661; *cf.* Taylor 2009: 13). The interviews were intended to stimulate critical reflection (Mezirow 2009: 20; 3.2.3.3) on the PAR phase as a whole (Interview guide, Appendix X) (Fontana & Frey 2000: 652; Denscombe 2007: 188).

4.5 TRIANGULATION OF THE DATA

Triangulation in this study refers to the combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods in the mixed methods research design as a whole, as well as in relation to the qualitative data collection methods in the PAR phase more specifically (Flick 2006: 37; Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998: 42). The survey provided a general picture of the views of teachers of Life Orientation towards teaching for religious and cultural diversity, while the qualitative data collection methods in the PAR phase provided more situated and subjective viewpoints on religious and cultural diversity (*cf.* Flick 2006: 33; Denzin & Lincoln 2000: 5; Creswell 2003: 16; Denscombe 2007: 138). In this research, triangulation of the data served to view the key issues in the research question from various perspectives and is in keeping with the pragmatist philosophical underpinnings (*cf.* 4.2.2) (Denscombe 2007: 109; Creswell 2003: 12).

4.6 DATA ANALYSIS METHODS AND PROCEDURES: QUAN THROUGH QUAL

4.6.1 Overview of the data analysis procedures

Since multiple data collection methods were employed over a period of time to harvest the data in this mixed methods research, it seemed more feasible to perform a global analysis of the data, in which themes were identified across the various data sets, rather than disassembling them by "chunking (them) into segments" (Henning *et al* 2004: 109; Flick 2006: 315). According to Flick (2006: 315), the aim of global analysis is to obtain an overview of the "thematic range" of the text which is to be analysed. Henning *et al* (2004: 109) suggest that global analysis means viewing the data from "an integrated perspective", identifying main themes from a holistic reading of the data (Punch 2009: 190; Flick 2006: 315; Kvale 1996: 184). The themes should connect in a meaningful way to a central point, in this case the research question/s (1.5) and the theoretical framework (Flick 2006: 315; Henning *et al* 2004:109).

The thematic network was developed by identifying themes in the analysis of the survey questionnaire. These themes were then sought horizontally (*cf*. Van Zyl 2007a, 2007b) across the data, and thereafter developments, deviations or variations of these themes were explored vertically (*cf*. Van Zyl 2007a, 2007b) for depth of meaning at various points in the QUAL data, viz. "across" the PAR stages and "down" at various points. In addition, new themes were identified as these emerged in each PAR phase.

Within the global analysis framework, two main approaches to "working the data" or "building the interpretive text" were used (Henning *et al* 2004: 103), viz. thematic content analysis and narrative analysis, both with elements of discourse analysis. A narrative approach to the data was undertaken, since the responses to the interviews could be described as "storied accounts" (Clandinin & Connelly 2000: 134; Punch 2009: 190) of experiences of INSET or of teaching and

learning for diversity in the classroom. These storied accounts also provided valuable information about the "lived experiences", lifeworld or frames of reference of the participants and how these influenced their coming to terms with the complexities of diversity in the classroom (*cf.* Mezirow 2000, 2009) (3.2.3.1). Maintaining the "narrativised" accounts in the presentation of the data meant that I was also able to preserve a sense of the dialogical or the mutual engagement that characterised the focus group interviews (*cf.* Wenger 1998, 2002) (3.2.3.4 (iii); 3.4.4.3).

4.6.2 Data analysis methods and procedures: QUAN (survey)

The survey data collected in the QUAN phase of the study were analysed using descriptive statistics (Denscombe 2007: 253):

- First, the data were subjected to a uni-variate analysis to determine and describe the main tendencies or patterns between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Percentages were used to represent the frequencies of closed or selected response questions, *YES*, *NO* and *UNSURE*.
- Second, the responses to the open-ended questions were transcribed to create "text" which was then subjected to thematic content analysis (*cf.* 4.6.3). Categories comprising particular words, terms and expressions used by the respondents were sought in the responses to the open-ended questions (Gillham 2000: 63; Taylor 2001: 9; Denscombe 2007: 236). These frequencies were categorised and coded and represented using actual numbers, of a total of 37, as well as percentages (Denscombe 2007: 237; Creswell & Plano Clark 2007: 131). Elements of discourse analysis were applied to investigate patterns in language use in relation to the discourses in education pertaining to the national curriculum statements and constitutional values and human rights (*cf.* Taylor 2001: 7).
- Third, correlations between variables were sought.
- Lastly, findings in the survey data were used to inform the PAR (QUAL) phase (*cf.* Figure 4.1). The themes identified in the survey questionnaire were extracted and presented in the focus group discussions to determine the individual teacher's understanding or relationship with them (4.4.4.1).

4.6.3 Data analysis methods and procedures: QUAL (Survey and PAR stages)

4.6.3.1 Thematic content analysis

A "theme" refers to recurring subject matter or material occurring in the qualitative data (Denscombe 2007: 236). Recurring elements or patterns in the data including words, images, expressions and ideas used to convey views on religious and cultural diversity in the NCS and Life Orientation were sought (*cf.* Taylor 2001: 15). Silverman (2000: 128) explains that thematic content analysis in qualitative research aims to understand the participants' categories and "to see how

these are used in concrete activities like telling stories" to determine the deeper experiences associated with their lifeworld, belief systems and contexts (*cf.* 4.7.3).

4.6.3.2 Discourse analysis

An aim of discourse analysis is "to identify patterns of language and related practices to show how these constitute aspects of society and the people within it" (Taylor 2001: 9; Denscombe 2007: 308). Elements of discourse analysis were applied to the data in this study in so far as words, terms and expressions were used by the respondents to the survey questionnaire and by the participants in the interviews in the PAR phase to express their understanding of democracy and diversity (Taylor 2001: 7). Frequencies of terms and expressions that position respondents and participants in relation to the democratic discourse of post-apartheid South Africa were sought in the data (*cf.* Gee 2008: 129). The discourses of teachers in relation to the activity of Life Orientation teaching and learning were sought in the data (*cf.* Taylor 2001: 8).

4.6.3.3 Narrative analysis

Elements of narrative analysis were also employed in the analysis of the qualitative data (Gubrium & Holstein 2009). The reason for drawing on narrative analysis is associated with the kinds of responses to the interviews evident in the data. It must be noted that I did not set out to conduct a narrative inquiry. But, since much of the data occurred as narrative, the decision was to subject the accounts to narrative analysis so as not to separate themes, issues or experiences from their broader contexts of meaning in the data, or from the person who "narrated" them (***cf.*** 4.6.1) (Kvale 1996: 184; Elliot 2005: 36; Punch 2009: 190). This decision is in keeping with an argument presented by Elliot (2005: 36) that there seems to be in the social sciences a "growing dissatisfaction with rigidly structured research interviews, which can artificially fragment individual's experiences" and a "growing interest in the way that identity is shaped in interaction and through discourse" (ibid).

Punch (2009: 190), for example, suggests that much educational research data occurs "naturally" in story form. "Even where data are not explicitly solicited in story form, participants will often give narrative responses to an interviewer's questions" (ibid: 190). Riessman (1993: 3) points out that while most of the "talk" in qualitative interviews is not narrative, but question-and-answer exchanges, arguments and various other forms of discourse, it is not unusual for respondents in interview situations to organise their replies into lengthy stories. Gubrium & Holstein (2009: 42) maintain that narratives are responses to questions of meaning. Hence, telling stories in responses to questions posed in an interview, for example, enables people to make sense of experiences, to express or interpret truths or factual information, personal histories and descriptions of their environments (Henning *et al* 2004: 122; *cf.* Clandinin & Connelly 2000: 130ff; Riessman 1993: 4,

54). In this research, the participants cast some of their responses in narrative form to bring personal experiences of religion or belief into the research context (*cf.* Denzin & Lincoln 2000: 15). For this reason the data could not be fragmented into isolated words, expressions or statements aside of the narratives in which they emerged.

From a social justice perspective, narrative in public discourse, according to Young (2000: 70ff), becomes the means for people to "give voice" to different kinds of experiences that might otherwise go unheard. Allowing participants to narrate their experiences of the multicultural classroom and how they had or had not been trained for its complexities allowed them to "make a point", as Young (2000: 72) puts it, "to demonstrate, describe, explain or justify something to others". This turned out to be an important aspect of what a community of practice could contribute to recognising the individual-in-community (*cf.* Elliott 2005: 10). Furthermore, the contents of the narratives potentially contributed to developing the shared domain and the repertoire of the community of practice (*cf.* 3.4.4).

4.7 PROCEDURE FOLLOWED IN THE ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY OF THE PAR DATA

The data obtained from the PAR stages were analysed and summarized according to the following procedure to ensure the reliability of the research process (Creswell & Plano Clark 2007: 133; Mertens 2009: 236):

4.7.1 Focus group interviews, observations and the one-to-one semi-structured interviews were transcribed into text.

4.7.2 A thorough reading of all of the focus group interview transcriptions, observation field notes and one-to-one interviews was undertaken to obtain an overall impression of the entire data set. The reason for doing this was to look for "the organising logic in the structure of the data" (Henning *et al* 2004: 109). The data yielded numerous narrative or storied accounts pertaining to the participants' particular contexts, experiences of INSET and of teaching Life Orientation, as well as what I have labeled as "commentary". "Narrative" and "commentary" were then reread with an "inquiry intention" (Clandinin & Connelly 2000: 132), viz. for depth of meaning and with the view to identifying themes located in the survey questionnaire.

4.7.3 The pieces in the data that were labeled as "narrative" contained accounts of past events, happenings or experiences from the lifeworlds of the respondents. The pieces that were labeled "commentary" did not fit the narrative label but contained some opinion or interpretation of events, occurrences or situations from the perspective of the participants as Life Orientation teachers (*cf.* Kvale 1996: 192). In some instances the commentary from one participant prompted narrative by another, or the other way round.

4.7.4 The narratives and commentary were then subjected to thematic content analysis and coded according to the main themes or key ideas that they captured. The themes located in the survey data were sought in the QUAL data sets and new themes identified in the QUAL data specifically (Creswell & Plano Clark 2007: 131). Connections were sought across the data sets in keeping with the principles of global analysis (Flick 2006: 316; Henning *et al* 2004: 109).

4.7.5 The themes were identified as these pertained to answering the research questions using deductive, inductive and abductive inference (*cf.* 3.2.3.3; 4.2.2). In some of the data sets, the themes were defined according to "thematic structures" whose defining characteristics could be located by networking related concepts in the data (*cf.* SQ 10, 11, 12, 13, 14) (Flick 2006: 309). Instances of agreement and disagreement between the various data sources, QUAN and QUAL, were sought, particularly where the qualitative data could make the quantitative data more meaningful (Creswell & Plano Clark 2007: 9, 35).

4.7.6 Hence, the interpretive process entailed generating meaning from the data inductively through the interplay of techniques applied during the analysis process and by returning to specific passages to construct deeper interpretations of themes.

4.7.7 It was eventually possible to establish a set of generalisations that cover the consistencies discerned in the entire database (*cf.* Miles & Huberman 1994: 9).

4.8 CREATING THE LENS FOR THE DATA ANALYSIS

The lens through which the data were analysed comprised a synthesis of:

- Principles of transformative learning theory: in particular, reflection and levels of reflection (Taylor 2007: 178) in dialogue, in keeping with the elements of "communicative learning" as contributing to mutual engagement in a community of practice (*cf.* Mezirow 2000: 8, 2009: 20) (3.2.3.3).
- The community of practice concept, particularly in terms of how it had worked in practice (3.3, 3.4.4).
- Applicability of a community of practice approach to teacher learning through participation for religious and cultural diversity (3.4.3).
- The question, what or who functions as the catalyst or trigger for critical reflection, facilitating transformative learning (Taylor 2009: 7)?

Both the narrative and commentary, as well the elements contained in them, became the object of analysis (*cf.* Elliot 2005: 38). Thematic content analysis was implemented to identify key themes or ideas that would be sought across the data sets in the spirit of networked global analysis.

4.9 CRITERIA FOR CODING SECTIONS IN THE DATA

The following criteria were derived from the data and determined whether sections of data would be coded as narrative or commentary.

4.9.1 Data as narrative

- The response was usually biographical. It involved a story of the self, an event, an occurrence, a belief (*cf.* Clandinin & Connelly 2000: 121).
- Reponses were usually lengthy, providing evidence of a storyline.
- In the telling, as Riessman (1993: 3) has noted, the respondents would "take the listeners into a 'past time or world'" and they would recapitulate what had happened to him/her at that point in time in order to make a point, often a "moral one" (ibid), viz. what he/she perceived to be right or wrong.

The narratives or storied accounts included:

- Narratives of how participants became Life Orientation teachers.
- Narratives about classroom practice.
- Narratives about their social-cultural contexts.
- Narratives of how the participants experienced Life Orientation INSET programmes.

4.9.2 Data as commentary

- Sections in the data that did not have a story line to them or were not particularly biographical.
- These segments were characteristically explanations or commentary on how the participants perceived certain issues or events external to themselves.
- Commentary often prompted a narrative account. In some instances a narrative account would prompt or provoke commentary from participants.

4.10 SUMMARY AND REFLECTIONS ON THE CHAPTER

An overview of the research design and process has been presented in this chapter. I have motivated for a mixed methods approach on the grounds that different types of data (quantitative and qualitative) would provide a better understanding of the research problem, than one or the other.

The research design and process were undertaken with the theoretical framework clearly in focus. The aim was to design a research strategy that would allow the communities of practice concept to be operationalised and observed from within a research perspective or stance (Cochran-Smith

2004: 21) (2.3.3 (ii)). The cross-sectional survey provided a generalised view of the Life Orientation teacher and the extent of his/her training for Citizenship education/Religion education. The PAR overlapped more considerably with the transformative aims of the sequential transformative mixed methods strategy (Creswell 2003: 217). The various qualitative data collection methods implemented in the PAR phase of the study, viz. the focus group interviews/ discussions, participant observation and semi-structured one-to-one interviews, were selected and moulded to create the space for mutual engagement in relation to the domain of interest and the shared repertoire, the internal dimensions of the community of practice (Wenger 1998: 73) (*cf.* 3.4.4). Moreover, in keeping with the democratic principles that underpin this research as a whole, the communicative space was designed to maximise the opportunities for the democratic expression of divergent views (Kemmis 2006: 103; Nieto 2000: 46, 315) in keeping with transformative learning theory (3.2.3.5).

A detailed account of the QUAN phase of the study is presented in the next chapter (Chapter 5), viz.:

- the process of administering the cross-sectional survey questionnaire;
- the presentation of the data; and
- the analysis and interpretation of the data.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS, SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATION OF THE SURVEY DATA

5.1 INTRODUCTION

A description of the mixed methods approach as it was defined for this study was presented in Chapter 4. This chapter focuses specifically on the first phase of the sequential transformative strategy, viz. the process of conducting the cross-sectional survey, as well as the analysis, summary and interpretation of the survey data. The data from each question or cluster of questions have been represented in tabular format, followed by a discussion of the findings.

The chapter is structured as follows:

- An overview is presented of how the cross-sectional survey was conducted;
- A detailed analysis of the survey questionnaires is presented, question by question;
- Each of the analyses is followed by a discussion of the findings;
- A summary of the key findings from the survey as a whole is presented after the question-by-question analysis;
- The chapter concludes with a summary and reflections on the findings of the survey as a whole in preparation for the PAR phase of the empirical research, which is presented in Chapter 6.

5.2 CONDUCTING THE CROSS-SECTIONAL SURVEY

The cross-sectional survey was conducted in August/September 2007. The survey was distributed amongst 60 secondary schools across 13 districts of the 15 in Gauteng.

Thirty-seven (N = 37; 62%) Life Orientation teachers completed and returned the survey questionnaires. The highest rate of return was through the university student fieldworkers (4.3.2) who assisted in the distribution, and the lowest those returned in the mail. Student fieldworkers who were unable to return the questionnaires assigned to them provided various reasons for the non-return. In some cases, students reported that the principals of the schools had lost the questionnaire before even handing it to a Life Orientation teacher. Others reported disinterest by teachers at the school or even refusal to participate on the grounds that completing the questionnaire “was adding to their workloads”. Nevertheless, the 62% return provided adequate information to construct a “snapshot” (Cohen *et al* 2000: 175) of trends or patterns in the approach

to Life Orientation in general and Religion education more specifically, amongst teachers in this region at a point in time (*cf*. Denscombe 2007: 28).

5.3 ANALYSIS OF THE BIOGRAPHICAL DATA IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The biographical section of the survey revealed how a population of Life Orientation teachers was distributed across a number of variables. The variables were worked into the survey questions as was explained in Chapter 4 (4.3.1; 4.3.3.1).

The age-group categories, sex and home language of the respondents have been summarised in Table 5.1 and their religious or spiritual affiliation in Table 5.2.

5.3.1 Age-group categories, sex and home language (SQ 1, 2, 3).

Table 5.1: Age-group categories, sex and home language

AGE GROUP	**N = 37**
Age 21-30 years	N = 6
Age 31-39 years	N = 10
Age 40-49 years	N = 13
Age 50 and over	N = 8
SEX	**N =37**
Male	N = 10
Female	N = 27
HOME LANGUAGE	**N = 37**
English	N = 14
Afrikaans	N = 9
SeTswana	N = 7
SePedi	N = 4
TshiVenda	N = 2
IsiXhosa	N = 1
IsiZulu	N = 1
Bilingual (English & Afrikaans)	N = 1
	N=38

Discussion of the findings: SQ 1, 2, 3

An analysis of the age-group categories reveals that 83% (N = 31:37) of the Life Orientation teachers who participated in this survey are over the age of 31. 57% (N = 21:37) of the participants are over the age of 40. If one compares these numbers with the age-group profiles (4.3.3.2 (ii)), more than 80% of the teachers in this sample were subjected to apartheid education and would in all likelihood not have been trained to teach for and about religious and cultural diversity. This would be the case unless Religious Studies or Comparative Religious Studies had been included in their undergraduate or postgraduate courses (*cf*. SQ 7 below).

The home language question was included in the biographical section to determine how the participants were distributed across language groups, since language is an aspect of diversity. I made the decision to avoid asking respondents to categorise themselves according to “race”, but still wanted to have an idea as to how the respondents distributed ethnically, because ethnicity may contribute towards diversity of religion or worldview. On completion of the analysis of this question, I concluded that language is not a good indicator of ethnicity, since Indian and Coloured people in South Africa may speak both or either English and Afrikaans. The religious affiliation taken in conjunction with language was a better indicator of the diversity in the sample, than language alone, or religion alone. The data indicate that English is the language spoken as a home language by 14 (N = 14) people in this group, Afrikaans N = 9, seTswana N = 7, TsiVenda N = 2, sePedi N = 4 and isiZulu and isiXhosa N = 1 each. English is, however, the medium of communication used by all of the members of the sample, since all were able to respond to the questionnaire.

5.3.2 The religious or spiritual orientation of the respondents (SQ 4).

Table 5.2: The religious or spiritual orientation of the respondents

RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL AFFILIATION	N = 37
Christian (no denomination specified)	N = 10
Christian (denomination specified)	
▪ Roman Catholic	N = 4
▪ Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) (Dutch Reformed Church)	N = 7
▪ Methodist	N = 3
▪ Anglican	N = 2
▪ Baptist	N = 1
▪ Non-denominational (Union)	N = 1
▪ Seventh Day Adventist	N = 2
▪ Grace Bible Church	N = 1
African Independent Churches	
▪ Zionist Christian Church (ZCC)	N = 1
▪ International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC)	N = 1
Hindu (no traditions specified)	N = 3
No religion	N = 1

Discussion of the findings: SQ 4

The categories of religion listed in Table 5.2 were not specified in the questionnaire since I anticipated an array of different responses regarding religious and spiritual worldviews from the respondents. These categories were formulated from the responses provided in the questionnaire.

Of the 37 respondents, 89% (N = 33:37) indicated that they are Christian in some way. Three (N = 3) of the respondents said they are Hindu, but with no further explanation and one respondent (N = 1) indicated no religion. These affiliations are likely to change according to the region from which a sample is taken. However, on the grounds that Christianity has the highest following in South Africa (80%)[28], it is possible that Christian affiliation in this sample of Life Orientation teachers can be generalised to the population. An interesting fact to note concerning Christianity in South Africa, however, is the diversity amongst denominations. The responses displayed in Table 5.3 indicate that the teacher-respondents belong predominantly to various Christian denominations such as the Roman Catholic Church, the NGK and various other Protestant Churches. Also included in the responses (although in the minority in this sample) are churches that are unique in Southern Africa, commonly known by the appellation 'African Independent Churches' (or Indigenous Churches). These include the Zionist Christian Church (ZCC) and the International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC). That these churches appear in the data is significant since the history of the Independent Churches and the contributions of their members to South African society cannot be overlooked in creating a professional knowledge base for teachers of Citizenship education/Religion education (*cf*. Kiernan 1995: 116ff; Oosthuizen, Kitshoff & Dube (eds.) 1994; Chidester 1992).

5.3.3 The academic and professional qualifications of the respondents (SQ 5)

All of the respondents (N = 37) to SQ 5 indicated that they have a recognised diploma or degree. The academic and professional qualifications include a three-year teacher's diploma (Primary Teacher's Diploma or Secondary Teacher's Diploma), but the majority of respondents in this sample have a Bachelor's degree with at least 51% (N = 19:37) having completed an honour's degree. Fourteen percent (14%; N = 5:37) of these respondents indicated that they have completed a Master's degree. The entire cohort of respondents appears to have an appropriate qualification for the teaching profession, but the 24% (N = 9:37) who have completed an honour's degree, and the further 5% (N = 2:37) who have completed or are in the process of completing a Master's degree, indicated a specialisation in Educational Psychology. Not one of the respondents in this sample indicated a postgraduate specialisation in Religion Studies or Citizenship education topics.

5.3.4 The districts in which the schools of the respondents are situated (SQ 6)

Based on the 62% return of the questionnaire, the responses to SQ 6 indicated the following return according to the districts:

[28] This figure is provided in the 2001 national census figures [online] www.MediaClubSouthAfrica.com [Accessed on 3 January 2010].

Table 5.3: Survey return according to districts

	DISTRICT	N = 37
1	Ekurhuleni North	2
2	Ekurhuleni South	1
3	Ekurhuleni East	1
4	Gauteng East	1
5	Gauteng North	1
6	Gauteng West	3
7	Johannesburg Central	4
8	Johannesburg East	9
9	Johannesburg North	2
10	Johannesburg South	7
11	Johannesburg West	3
12	Sedibeng East	0
13	Sedibeng West	3

Although the schools that returned questionnaires were spread across 12 districts (one district did not yield a return), the greatest concentration of schools to participate were those in the Johannesburg south (N = 7:37) and Johannesburg east (N = 9:37) districts. The remainder of the schools were spread more or less evenly across the other eight districts.

5.3.5 Courses completed in religion in undergraduate and postgraduate studies (SQ 7)

The results of the analysis of SQ 7 have been tabulated as follows:

- Table 5.4a: Completion of courses including religion in undergraduate studies (SQ 7.1, 7.1.1, 7.1.2 and 7.1.3). The data from SQ 7.1.2 and SQ 7.1.3 have been combined.
- Table 5.4b: Qualifications and feeling prepared to manage religious and cultural diversity in the classroom (SQ 7.1.4).
- Table 5.4c: Did not feel prepared to manage religious and cultural diversity (SQ 7.1.4).
- Table 5.4d: Courses on religion in postgraduate studies (SQ 7.2).

Table 5.4a: Question 7.1 Courses completed in religion in undergraduate studies

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Question 7.1: Did you complete any courses or modules to do with religion in your undergraduate studies?</td></tr>
<tr><td>YES
N = 21:37 (57%)</td><td>NO
N = 16:37 (43%)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">SQ 7.1.1: The names of the courses or modules in religion provided by the respondents included the following:</td></tr>
<tr><td>▪ Biblical Studies
▪ Religious Education
▪ World Religions
▪ Comparative Religions
▪ Other (diversity within course</td><td>N = 11
N = 5
N = 1
N = 1
N = 3</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">SQ 7.1.2 / 7.1.3: Explanation of YES responses (N = 21:37; 57%)
Names of courses and what they included</td></tr>
<tr><td>THEMES</td><td>THEMATIC STRUCTURES /evidence from the data</td></tr>
<tr><td>SQ.7#Theme 1:

Biblical Studies
(N = 11:37; 30%)</td><td>• Courses included typical Biblical Studies content, viz. Old and New Testament studies, Bible history, geography of the Bible, hermeneutics (Christian theological focus); one case included Pastoral Care and Counselling.
• Courses in Biblical Studies may (N = 5:37; 14%) or may not have included diverse religions (N = 6:37; 16%).</td></tr>
<tr><td>SQ.7#Theme 2:

Religious Education
(N = 5:37; 14%)</td><td>• The duration of the courses ranged from five weeks to a full one-year course (N = 5:37; 14%).
• Courses had (N = 3:37) or had not included diverse religions.

Note: N = 2:37 - one could not remember and one did not respond</td></tr>
<tr><td>SQ.7#Theme 3:

Short courses included diversity
(N = 5:37; 14%)</td><td>• Diversity had been included as units within other academic subjects, viz. Philosophy of Education, Sociology, “values in education vs. religious education” (N = 3:37).
• In two cases (N = 2:37) courses were specifically referred to as “World Religions” or “Comparative Religions”.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Q. 7.1.3: Explanation of NO responses (N = 16:37; 43%)

These respondents indicated that they had not taken any courses to do with religion in their undergraduate studies.</td></tr>
</table>

Discussion of the findings: SQ 7.1, 7.1.1, 7.1.2, 7.1.3

The *YES* and *NO* responses were clustered and coded according to what the respondents indicated had been offered in their undergraduate courses on religion (SQ 7.1.3). The clustering of similar responses gave rise to a number of thematic structures (Flick 2006: 308). Thematic structures or thematic domains comprise various characteristics of a theme clustered together as a result of cross-checking the data (4.6.1).

Five of the 11 (N = 5:37; 14%) respondents who indicated taking Biblical Studies as an undergraduate major also indicated that diverse religions had been included in their undergraduate courses. The remaining six (N = 6:11) had not been exposed to diverse religions in their undergraduate Biblical Studies courses at all. The curriculum described by the respondents was in keeping with the type of studies in religion available at colleges of education and universities during the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s (AGC 40+) (*cf*. 4.3.3.2 (ii)), when these respondents would in all likelihood have completed their undergraduate studies. Two of the eleven respondents (N = 2:11) completed diplomas in theology at a Bible School. Their courses still fitted the typical Biblical Studies profile taught in colleges of education and some universities at the time they conducted their studies, but these courses, according to the respondents, had included "other" religions, with one of the two pointing out, "especially to armour our youth about their beliefs from others".

The total number of respondents for whom content on diverse religions had been included in their undergraduate courses is N = 13:37 (35%). This number comprises:

- five (N = 5:37;14%) who had taken Biblical Studies which had included diverse religions;
- three (N = 3:37; 8%) who had taken Religious education with diverse religions; and
- five (N = 5:37; 14%) where topics or modules on diversity and values had been included in other academic subjects, such as Sociology and Philosophy.

The number of respondents for whom religious diversity had been included at some level in their undergraduate courses is 35% (N = 13:37), and not the 57% (N = 21:37) of the pure *YES* responses. This is a case in which qualitative data better explains quantitative data (4.2.1) (*cf*. Creswell & Plano Clark 2007: 9, 35). The open-ended responses provided a far more accurate picture of what 'religion' in teacher education courses actually entailed for the respondents in this sample.

The highest level achieved in any of the courses on religion (SQ 7.1.2) ranges from a third-year academic major in Biblical Studies, with or without modules in Religious Studies, usually with teaching methodology, to a module within a course lasting a few weeks to one year, mostly with some form of Religious Studies. In some cases a Religion Studies module was included with Biblical Studies. It appears that those respondents who completed only a short module to do with religions, covered diverse religions more so than those respondents who majored in Biblical Studies. The changing trend with regard to the inclusion of some level of Religious studies/ Religion education in teacher education qualifications after 1994 is evident in the responses of those teachers in age-group category 1 (21-30 years).

The numbers of respondents who indicated that they had not studied diverse religions in their Biblical Studies courses have been added to the numbers who had not taken any courses in religion at all, (i.e. 16 + 8). Hence, the number of teachers in this sample who are teaching Life Orientation without having had any input on religious diversity in their qualifications amounts to 65% of the sample (N = 24:37).

All of those respondents who had taken Biblical Studies fall into age-group categories 2, 3 or 4 meaning that they had completed their schooling and tertiary education in the 1970s and 1980s at the height of the apartheid era (*cf.* 4.3.3.2 (ii)). Based on these findings, it is possible that teachers of Life Orientation in general avoid teaching about diverse religions or beliefs, because they were not exposed to religious diversity in their undergraduate studies and hence do not have the knowledge.

Table 5.4b: Question 7.1.4 *YES* responses

Question 7.1.4: Did this course or module prepare you to manage teaching and learning about religions and cultures? Please give reasons for your answer.			
YES N = 12:37 (32%)	NO N = 17:37 (46%)	YES and NO N = 2:37 (5%)	Did not respond N = 6:37 (16%)
SQ 7.1.4: Explanations of *YES* responses (N = 12:37; 32%) This number included those who had taken Biblical Studies, Comparative Religions (in Sociology and Philosophy) and Religious education (*cf*. responses to SQ 7.1 and 7.1.3)			
THEME	**THEMATIC STRUCTURES / evidence from the data**		
SQ.7#Theme 4: **Unit in Biblical Studies major** **(N = 5:37; 14%)**	• Undergraduate Biblical Studies had included a unit in diverse religions and cultures or Comparative Religious Studies; • Respondents had been taught in a way that allowed them to transfer their knowledge to work with key features of different religions.		
SQ. 7#Theme 5: **Within short courses: Religious education, Sociology, Philosophy.** **(N = 7:37; 19%)**	• Only outlines of religions were provided (in Sociology 1), but able to understand and promote diversity; • Courses gave insight into religions; • Enough to manage a class's different religions and cultures. Taught to handle sensitive issues, discrimination and accommodation of others.		

Table 5.4c: Question 7.1.4 *NO* responses

SQ 7.1.4: Explanations of *NO* responses (N = 17:37; 46%)

N = 6:37 who provided explanations for *NO* responses. N = 11:37 who did not provide reasons for *NO* responses.

THEME	THEMATIC STRUCTURES / evidence from the data
SQ.7#Theme 6: **Biblical Studies major (N = 5; 14%)**	• Course could be characterised as "religious instruction"*;* • The focus had been on the Bible and related topics such as dogmatics, hermeneutics, Old Testament, New Testament, Greek, Hebrew, history and geography of the Bible; • No studies in religious diversity at all.
SQ.7#Theme 7: **Short course in "World Religions" (N = 1)**	• Origins of different religions studied; • Course had been "content and context based, but not really classroom related" [Respondent 36].

SQ 7.1.4: Explanations for *YES* and *NO* responses (N = 2:37; 5%)

These responses were not coded because they were individual responses:

- **Respondent 31:** *NO* on the grounds that the Biblical Studies course had focused on one faith only, viz. Christianity, but YES because the course had provided an in-depth understanding and framework from which to "study and compare others".
- **Respondent 6:** *YES* referred to the respondent having been taught about respect for all religions and common values, but NO, in that she was still "unaware of all religions".

Table 5.4d: Teacher qualifications in postgraduate studies

Question 7.2: Courses or modules to do with religion in postgraduate studies.	
YES N = 9:37 (24%)	NO N = 28:37 (76%)

Discussion of the findings: SQ 7.1.4, 7.2

The respondents who answered *YES* (N = 12:37; 32%) to SQ 7.1 (Table 5.4b) did so on the grounds that their courses in undergraduate or postgraduate studies had included units or modules on diverse religions and cultures. Even though, in some cases, the courses were short and provided limited knowledge on different religions, the courses still provided adequate knowledge to enable teachers to manage diversity in the classroom.

The *NO* responses to SQ 7.1.4 (Table 5.4c) indicate that 46% (N = 17:37) of the sample did not feel that their undergraduate courses had prepared them for teaching and learning religious and cultural diversity in Life Orientation. Five of these *NO* responses corresponded with those who had indicated in SQ 7.1.3 that their Biblical Studies courses definitely had not prepared them for religious diversity because the courses had focused on the Bible only. Added to those who did not respond at all (N = 6:37; 16%), the number rises to 60% (N = 23:37) of the sample.

Two of the respondents who had answered *YES* to SQ 7.2 (Table 5.4d) had misunderstood the question as there was no indication of postgraduate study in their responses to other questions in the questionnaire (*cf.* SQ 5). Most of those who had responded *YES* had covered Religion education in a postgraduate certificate in education or in an honours course.

5.4 ANALYSIS OF THE POLICY AND CURRICULUM DATA IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

5.4.1 Teacher familiarity with public policy on religion in education (SQ 8)

This question had been included to determine teachers' familiarity with the *National Policy on Religion and Education* (DoE 2003b) (4.3.3.2 (iii)). The responses have been summarised in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5: Teacher familiarity with public policy on religion in education

Question 8: How familiar are you with the National Policy on Religion and Education?		
1	I have not heard of the policy.	N = 3 (8%)
2	I know of the policy, but haven't as yet read it.	N = 15 (41%)
3	I have read the policy, I am familiar with its contents, but don't apply the contents in my teaching.	N = 4 (11%)
4	I am very familiar with the contents and apply the contents in my teaching.	N = 12 (32%)
	Number who responded to this question	**N = 34**

Discussion of the findings: SQ 8

Two (N = 2:37) of the respondents did not respond at all to this question. A third response was discarded since the respondent ticked all of the four options, seemingly not understanding the question.

Respondents were required to provide explanations for selected responses 3 and 4. The explanatory comments in the open section have been clustered according to recurring themes. Those who have applied the contents of the *National Policy* in the classroom (NPRE) (attend to diverse religions and cultures) explained as follows:

- Religion cannot be imposed; learners have the right to their own religion.
- Learners should have knowledge of all religions; should respect others.
- To broaden knowledge of others' beliefs and religions.
- Develop an understanding of own and others.
- Allow learners to question, for respect, growth. Insight is vitally important in a mixed faith community.

- Some respondents mentioned having been exposed to the *National Policy on Religion and Education* at cluster meetings (meetings of groups of teachers from a group of schools in a district is called a 'cluster').

The numbers indicate that fewer than half of the respondents know of and/or apply the policy in a positive way in learning and teaching in the classroom (N = 12:37; 32%). It is interesting to note that the comments listed above from the respondents are affirming of religious diversity.

5.4.2 Teacher attendance at INSET programmes for Life Orientation (SQ 9)

The results of the analysis of SQ 9 have been tabulated as follows:

- Table 5.6a: Teacher attendance at INSET and the locations (SQ 9, 9.1).
- Table 5.6b: Focus areas or topics included in INSET programmes (2004-2007) (SQ. 9.2).
- Table 5.6c: Whether or not teachers felt prepared to teach Life Orientation having attended INSET (SQ 9.3).
- Table 5.6d: Whether or not INSET programmes included a section on diverse religions and cultures (SQ 9.4).

Table 5.6a: Question 9, 9.1 - Attendance at Life Orientation INSET and locations

Question 9: Have you attended any in-service training workshops in preparation for teaching Life Orientation Grades 10-12?		
YES N = 29:37 (78%)	NO N = 6:37 (16%).	DID NOT RESPOND N = 2:37 (5%)
Those who did not respond at all to this question were counted as having given *NO* responses as they did not respond to the layered questions that followed either, viz. stipulating where they had attended INSET and what the INSET programmes had entailed. This raises the *NO* responses to this question from 16% to 21% (N = 8:37).		
Question 9.1: Indicate where and when the training workshops were held.		
All respondents who had attended INSET did so between 2004 and 2007 in different centres around Gauteng. A list of these centres has been compiled from the responses: • 2004 Wits School of Education, Johannesburg • 2004 Civic Centre (no indication which Civic Centre) • 2005 at the former Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) (now University of Johannesburg) • 2005 John Orr Technical High School, Johannesburg • 2005 Sebokeng College, Vanderbijlpark • 2005 and 2006 Westridge High School • 2005 Soweto College • Training during the "June holidays" in 2005, but did not specify the location • 2006 Randfontein High School, Randfontein • 2006 Rand Girls High, Johannesburg • 2006 Barnato Park High, Johannesburg.		

Table 5.6b: Question 9.2 - Focus areas or topics included in INSET programmes

Question 9.2: List some of the focus areas or topics included in the Life Orientation training workshops.	
• The topics that respondents listed as having been covered in the INSET programmes have been clustered to form the themes indicated below. In some cases the respondents listed combinations of topics that spanned across the themes. • The number of times that a theme occurred in the data was not converted to a percentage on the grounds that one response might indicate a combination of themes.	
THEMES	**THEMATIC STRUCTURES / evidence from the data**
SQ.9#Theme 1: **Life Orientation topics (N = 26 times in the data)**	• Inclusive education, barriers to learning, counselling and guidance; • Multiple intelligence, emotional IQ, different learners and their different needs; • The Life Orientation learning outcomes and assessment standards in the NCS (DoE 2003a); • Citizenship topics including responsible citizenship, cultural diversity, multiculturalism and 'anti-bias'; HIV/AIDS.
SQ.9#Theme 2: **Aspects of planning and preparation in relation to the NCS (N = 13 times in the data)**	• Lesson planning with outcomes and assessment standards; • Forms of assessment, designing rubrics; • Work schedules and learning programme guidelines; • Policy and planning; • Life Orientation skills, knowledge and values.

Discussion of the findings: SQ 9.2

Based on the lists of topics covered in INSET programmes provided by the respondents (Table 5.6b), it appears that there was little consistency in the content covered, or no sense of facilitators of INSET programmes having presented a coherent whole. Some programme facilitators focused on lesson planning and Life Orientation topics, while others appeared to focus more on policy and the 'technicist' aspects associated with compiling work schedules and lesson planning only. It also appears from the responses that content presented by the facilitators at INSET sessions varied from one centre to the next (reference to "multiple intelligences" and "emotional IQ", Table 5.6b). Religion and religious diversity do not appear in any of the respondents' lists. Two of the respondents commented on the general lack of knowledge, understanding and insight of the facilitators. For example: "Not once was Religious Studies covered. Mainly because of the incompetence of facilitators or lack of knowledge, understanding or insight" [Respondent 32].

Significantly 22% (N = 8:37) of the respondents did not complete this question, two of whom (N = 2:37) had indicated that they had attended INSET, while six (N = 6:37) or 16% had not attended INSET at all. This finding also shows that at least one third of this sample was teaching Life Orientation with no official training.

Table 5.6c: Question 9.3, *YES* and *NO* responses - teachers prepared to teach Life Orientation

Question 9.3: Do you feel adequately prepared to teach Life Orientation having attended the INSET workshop/s?			
YES N = 19:37 (51%)	NO N = 5:37 (14%)	UNSURE N = 6:37 (16%)	Did not respond N = 7:37 (19%)

SQ 9.3: Explanations of *YES* responses (N =19:37; 51%)	
THEMES	**THEMATIC STRUCTURES / evidence from the data**
SQ.9#Theme 3: **"Initial training prepared me" (N = 3:37; 8%)**	• Adequately prepared because of initial qualifications; • Undergraduate studies had included constituent subjects or focus areas of Life Orientation. Examples provided: Physical education and Psychology.
Respondent 1	"I qualified BA Phys Ed with Psychology. Have taught PE (Physical Education) and Guidance".
SQ.9#Theme 4: **Workshops provided clarity** **(N = 8:37; 22%)**	• Workshops provided clarity on outcomes and assessment standards, content, how to deal with issues such as bias and discrimination and lesson planning. • INSET programmes provided a framework regarding "needed" skills and information for the classroom.
Respondent 3	Did not understand before the workshops, but clarity was gained after.
SQ.9#Theme 5: **Own reading and/or self confidence** **(N = 6:37; 16%)**	• A combination of both own reading and personal interest enabled respondents to teach effectively. Note: Two did not explain their YES responses and one answered YES/NO.
Respondent 24	"If you bother to implement policy and put effort into your subject it is adequate".
Respondent 32	"I feel adequately prepared not because of courses offered, but because of personal studies and research".

Q. 9.3: Explanations of *NO* responses (N = 5: 37; 14%) and *UNSURE* responses (N = 6:37; 16%). The *NO* and *UNSURE* responses have been clustered together since the reasons given were similar. One respondent answered both *YES* and *NO*.	
THEMES	**THEMATIC STRUCTURE / evidence from the data**
SQ.9#Theme 6: ***NO* or *UNSURE* to feeling adequately prepared to teach Life Orientation.** **(N = 11:37; 30%)**	Since there were only six *NO* responses, the theme is *NO* to feeling prepared to teach Life Orientation. The thematic structure includes the reasons for selecting the *NO* response: • Life Orientation is too diverse in itself: it focuses on too many disciplines. • Not all educators can cope with the demands. Not all are trained in Human Movement, labour, industrial relations etc. • Physical education parts are challenging • Requirements (for Life Orientation) keep changing. • Facilitators are not always equipped to provide proper guidance on Life Orientation. • Time was wasted on planning common year plans and lesson plans together with educators from different schools together as a group • More training is needed.

Discussion of the findings: SQ 9.3

Nineteen (N = 37) or 51% of the respondents indicated that they felt adequately prepared to teach Life Orientation as a consequence of attending INSET, viz. half of the cohort. It is interesting to note that although only five (N = 37, 14%) of the respondents responded negatively that they did not feel adequately prepared to teach as a result of having attended INSET, the UNSURE responses (Table 5.6c) were as negatively expressed as what the *NO* responses were. It is also significant that not all of the respondents who had indicated *YES* to feeling prepared to teach Life Orientation had answered the question. SQ.9#Theme 5 was identified as a result of six (N = 6:37, 16%) of the respondents pointing out that they felt prepared to teach Life Orientation, because of "personal studies and research". This category reduces the actual number of *YES* responses from N = 19:37 to N = 13:37 (35%).

Those who did not respond at all to SQ 9 should not be overlooked in terms of the broader picture of the teachers' competence in teaching Life Orientation (*cf.* Table 5.6a; Table 5.6c). Adding the *NO* responses ("Do not feel prepared in spite of attending INSET") (N = 5:37), the *UNSURE* responses (N = 6:37) and those who did not respond, because they had not attended INSET (N = 7:37), gives a total of N = 18:37 or 49%. This indicates that almost half of the cohort did not feel confident in teaching Life Orientation, even though 78% (N = 29:37) had attended INSET. These numbers are interesting, given the type of knowledge that teachers require to teach Citizenship education effectively, let alone the entire Life Orientation learning area/subject (*cf.* 1.3, 2.2 (i - vi)).

Table 5.6d: Question 9.4 – Inclusion of diverse religions and cultures in INSET programmes

Question 9.4: Did the workshop/s that you attended include a section or unit on diverse religions and cultures as referred to in the National Curriculum Statement (Grades 10 -12)?		
The respondents who did not respond to SQ 9.4 were the same respondents as those who did not respond to SQ 9 and SQ 9.3**.**		
YES N = 13:37 (35%)	NO N = 16:37 (43%)	Did not respond N = 7:37 (19%)

Table 5.6d (continued)

SQ 9.4: Explanations of *YES* responses (N = 13:37; 35%).

The *YES* responses contained the topics or issues on diversity presented in the INSET programmes.

THEMES	THEMATIC STRUCTURES / evidence from the data
SQ.9#Theme 7: **Diverse religions and cultures-content**	• Oral tradition, scriptures, promoting peace. • Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, African religions (major religions, beliefs, cultures); diversity (N = 2). • Displays an understanding of major religions, ethical traditions and indigenous belief systems in South Africa, and explores how these contribute towards a harmonious society. (Comment: This respondent cited the NCS entry verbatim).
SQ.9#Theme 8: **Not enough detail in INSET**	• Covered very briefly as part of the FET training (N = 4). • Some background on diversity, but time was limited for details. • Religions were only briefly mentioned.
SQ.9#Theme 9: **Diversity concepts only**	• Issues around multiculturalism, inclusivity. • How not to be biased. • The legal dimensions associated with diversity and policy; • No discrimination on the basis of religion.

SQ 9.4: *NO* responses (N = 16:37; 43%)

The *NO* responses (N = 16:37) to SQ 9.4 have been added to *Did not respond* (N = 7:37)**.**
The N = 23:37 (62%).

Discussion of the findings: SQ 9.4

The number of respondents who indicated that topics on diverse religions and cultures had been included in the INSET programmes that they had attended amounts to N = 13:37 or 35%. The open-ended responses indicate that religions and cultures were treated “briefly”, “only mentioned”, “not in any depth”, largely due to “limited time”. This finding indicates an oversight on the grounds that Citizenship education, inclusive as it is of transformative outcomes (*cf.* 1.3; 2.2.3) and in spite of its being a clearly demarcated focus area of Life Orientation in the FET, had hardly featured in Life Orientation INSET programmes. This disparity in terms of what is stated in the NCS and what was included in INSET programmes becomes more significant when compared with trends in other countries where research initiatives and teacher training for Citizenship education and diversity are foregrounded in both pre-service and in-service teacher development initiatives (*cf.* Baumfield 2003; Bakker & Heimbrock (eds.) 2007; Weisse 2009a: 7; Ter Avest & Bakker 2009: 13; Everington 2009: 100; Miller 2009: 130). Of the 78% (N = 29:37) of respondents who had attended INSET, only 35% (N = 13:37) indicated that the programmes had included a section or unit on diverse religions and cultures as referred to in the NCS (DoE 2003a). 43% (N = 16:37) said that a unit on religious and cultural diversity had not been included. If the seven who did not respond to this question is added to the number of *NO* responses, then the number in this sample of those who had not been exposed to religious and cultural diversity rises to 62% (N = 23:37). The minimal

inclusion of Citizenship education/Religion education in INSET programmes viewed alongside the *NO* responses, leads one to conclude that INSET programmes have hardly contributed towards teacher development for Citizenship education as a whole. To reiterate, the minimal references to Citizenship education in the INSET programmes clearly would not enable teachers of Life Orientation to teach for the finer nuances associated with democracy and diversity in education as stated by educationalists such as Banks (1997), Banks *et al* (2005), Nieto (2000, 2006), Gay (2002) and Cochran-Smith (2004).

5.4.3 Teachers' disposition towards including topics on diverse religions and cultures in FET classes (SQ 10).

Question 10: How do you feel about including topics or themes on diverse religions and cultures in your Grade 10 and 11 Life Orientation lessons?

The response rate to SQ 10 was high (N = 35:37; 95%) and overwhelmingly positive in spite of the high numbers of *NO*, *UNSURE* and *NO* responses (49%) to SQ 9.3 ('Do you feel adequately prepared to teach Life Orientation'?) and the high *NO* responses to SQ 9.4 (62%) ('Did the INSET programmes include units on diverse religions and cultures'?).

SQ 10 was an open-ended question. The data gathered from this response were analysed using two methods: first thematic content analysis; and second, using elements of discourse analysis. The two different methods yielded different but interesting results.

5.4.3.1 Data analysis using thematic content analysis

The 37 responses to this question were captured as individual observations. The responses were coded and clustered according to recurring themes in the data. The clustering was based on five general themes or trends identified in the data (*cf.* 4.6). These themes have been tabulated with their thematic structures and examples from the data in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7: Themes - Thematic Content Analysis

THEME	THEMATIC STRUCTURES / evidence from the data
SQ.10#Theme 1: **For the benefit of the learners (N = 15:37; 41%)**	Respondents answered from the learners' perspective, viz. that learning about diverse religions and cultures is for the benefit of the learners, to be more knowledgeable, aware and tolerant towards others.
Respondent 4	It is a good integration and learners should be encouraged to know about other peoples' cultures and religions to become more tolerant and sensitive towards others.
Respondent 10	It is good for the learners to study the different religions and cultures because it makes them better citizens that understand and respect the values, culture and rights of other citizens.
Respondent 18	Yes, it should be on values. Makes a great contribution to acceptance, society and toleration towards other cultures and religious perspectives. Creates mutual respect and acceptance. [See Theme 3 below]
SQ.10#Theme 2: **From own perspective as teachers (N = 7:37; 19%)**	• Respondents answered from their own perspectives as teachers. • Expressed own personal positions towards different beliefs in positive and affirming terms.
Respondent 13	I feel good because you learn to deal with people of different cultural backgrounds and religions. It is challenging.
Respondent 29	I don't really mind including them, but as a committed Christian I don't have much passion for teaching about Hinduism, Buddhism etc. [See Theme 3 below]
Respondent 31	Positive and comfortable, open to growth and learning.
Respondent 32	Good, open and comfortable with it, because I am competent and knowledgeable to cover this component. I am not intimidated or threatened at all. Truth remains truth!
SQ.10#Theme 3: **From perspective of classroom experiences (N = 4:37; 11%)**	• From perspectives prompted by incidents in the classroom. • Reference to personal beliefs of the teacher and/or the school's ethos.
Respondent 7	Our school's grounding/foundation is in Christianity. It is good that learners are made aware of others' beliefs.
Respondent 16	My feeling is that I am glad to hear learners making meaning or creating understanding on diverse religions and cultures. Grade 10 & 11 learners are interested in talking about such issues especially when lessons integrate with Health Promotion, particularly sex, sexuality vs. religious and cultural views or standpoints.
Respondent 28	I don't have a problem with it, but learners tend to mock other religions. With the majority being Christian, they are not really interested in the other religions. Some learners are enthusiastic and want to know more. I also set a research project on religion and they actually took a concerted effort and delivered excellent work.

Table 5.7 (continued)

THEME	THEMATIC STRUCTURES / evidence from the data
SQ. 10#Theme 4: **Pluralist reality** **(N = 4:37; 11%)**	Respondents support the inclusion of diverse religions and cultures, because '*South Africa is a diverse country'.*
Respondent 20	I think this would promote our democratic values, since our country has that character of multiculturalism.
Respondent 33	It would be a brilliant idea. Learners need to know about different religions and cultures.
SQ. 10#Theme 5: **Teacher's agency and learner's interests** **(N = 6:37; 16%)**	Combination of teachers' agency and learners interests.
Respondent 19	We included this (meaning Religion education) in our Grade 9 planning. It should be included. It creates awareness, leads to understanding, tolerance and respect.
Respondent 37	To me it is extremely important to include topics or themes on diverse religions and cultures [ ] to promote religious tolerance and to give learners a chance to choose a religion or culture that suits the personality of the learner instead of a choice of their parents.

5.4.3.2 Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis was also used to analyse the data obtained from SQ 10. The reason for doing this was because an initial reading of the data revealed the use of particular words and terms which required analysis from a different perspective (Denscombe 2007: 308; Taylor 2001: 16). Various expressions and phrases affirming diversity were obvious and it seemed fitting to look for frequency of use in relation to the socio-political context of South Africa. Responses to this question reveal that at least 83% (N = 31:37) of the respondents answered using language that is affirming of diversity. The themes emerged from the data and were not imposed from outside. However, attention was drawn to these expressions because of the principles of democracy that underpins this study (*cf.* 1.8.5; 1.9.2; 1.9.3; 2.2.1). The words or phrases were coded and categorised as follows:

- **SQ. 10#DA 1: Importance**

Phrases that express the "importance" of including topics or themes on diverse religions and cultures in Life Orientation lessons occur 6 times (N = 6) in the data. These respondents linked "importance" with "increasing learners' knowledge and understanding of others" and "[making] learners more aware of others".

- **SQ. 10#DA 2: Knowledge and understanding**

The words “knowledge and understanding” or “knowing” about others appeared nine times in the data. In some cases “knowledge” was stipulated by respondents as being prerequisite for understanding, or in other cases as a prerequisite for “tolerance”. Knowledge and understanding enables learners to know “why certain people do certain things”. In other cases the respondents mentioned the significance of the teacher’s knowledge. In these cases, the effect of the teacher’s knowledge on what happens in the classroom was pointed out. The effects of learners having knowledge, or engaging in activities that increase their knowledge about diversity, were also clearly expressed in the responses. Hence, having knowledge enables learners to be “better citizens” and to “learn to deal with people of different cultural backgrounds and religions” (*cf.* 2.2.1 (v), 2.3; 3.4.4.1).

- **SQ. 10#DA 3: Values - respect, tolerance**

Many of the responses were expressed in values-related terms. The value “respect” was used explicitly six times (N = 6) and explicitly or implicitly nine times (N = 9) in the data. Respondents linked knowledge of diverse religions and cultures to the value of respect. Respondents expressed this idea mostly from the learners’ perspective, but sometimes from a global perspective including the teacher and the learner. The general idea expressed by respondents is that learners should learn to “respect the values, cultures and rights of other citizens”; that learning about diversity creates mutual respect, acceptance and appreciation for difference. “Respect” was sometimes used with “awareness” and sometimes with “tolerance”.

- **SQ. 10#DA 4: Wariness towards diversity**

In only a few cases was there evidence of some wariness from the respondents towards including topics or themes on religious and cultural diversity. These responses are worth quoting since each carries a perspective that could be a topic for dialogue in a community of practice:

  - “General information is good, but an in-depth study of religions is not fair (*sic).* General knowledge encourages tolerance towards one another and you understand why people do certain things. Knowledge is power. It is also interesting” [Respondent 2].
  - “It is difficult sometimes because learners come from different backgrounds. The learners seem not to know about other people’s cultures and religions” [Respondent 3].
  - “I prefer culture because the youth are not practising their cultures specifically their beliefs, norms, ethics etc. They tend to imitate western style. African cultures should be taught in multiracial schools not only township schools” [Respondent 22].
  - “I don’t really mind including them, but as a committed Christian I don’t have much passion for teaching about Hinduism and Buddhism” [Respondent 29].

Discussion of the findings: SQ 10

SQ 10 was asked in a general way that did not require respondents to admit to any level of competence. Scrutiny of the language used by respondents to SQ 10, using thematic content analysis, indicates that almost all in the sample responded positively towards including topics on diversity in Life Orientation classes. The analysis of the age-group categories in this sample indicates that 83% (N = 31:37) of the respondents were over the age of 31 and 57% (N = 21:37) were over the age of 40. Even though the majority of the respondents had been subjected to apartheid education, were mostly Christian and seemed not to have received adequate exposure to teaching and learning about diversity in their initial qualifications or INSET programmes, they engaged in a discourse that was affirming of diversity. The expressions used by the respondents including terms such as respect, tolerance and sensitivity to knowledge of diverse religions and cultures, and the emphasis on the importance of knowledge and understanding of others in the context of education, indicates that these teachers are using the discourse of the Constitution of South Africa and democracy. A similar finding emerged from questionnaires completed by pre-service teachers in the initial phase of the SANPAD-funded project (First Phase 2005) conducted between 2005 and 2008 (Roux, Smith *et al* 2009; Roux, Du Preez & Ferguson 2009: 67ff).

Even though the responses to SQ 10 reflected a positive stance towards diversity amongst this cohort of teacher-respondents, there is also evidence of problematic issues that have not been attended to in INSET programmes. These include the following:

- The need to be introduced to innovative pedagogical ideas to prevent boredom when topics are repeated across the grades.
- Limited time is assigned to Citizenship education in the Life Orientation learning area as a whole (*cf.* Learning programme guidelines DoE 2008: 19, 8% of the total time assigned to Life Orientation). Hence the tendency is to reduce content to a few reified topics (such as festivals, dress, food) which are then repeated year after year.
- The organisation of content across the grades is unsatisfactory, especially when the information about religions and cultures is as fragmented as it is in the NCS (*cf.* DoE 2002: 30, 31, 2003a: 25, 30, 34).

A main assumption at the outset of this research was that the teachers' age and their lifeworld could have an influence on their perceptions of and attitudes towards teaching and learning Religion education. Based on the numbers of teachers in this sample who are over the age of 40, and given the influences of apartheid education (CNE) (*cf*. 4.3.3.2), it seemed likely that teachers would resist teaching for religious diversity in Life Orientation. However, even though the age-group profiles as sketched in Chapter 4 suggested that there could be resistance to teaching for diversity, there was nothing in the data to support my assumption. The high level of responses

affirming that religious and cultural diversity should be included in Life Orientation (95% of responses) altered this initial assumption and suggested the opposite. However, the perceptions of teachers reflected in *this* sample may not be generalizable to the population, since social and political influences on how teachers respond to religious and cultural diversity could differ from one region to another and from one school to another. This reality was indicated in both Du Preez (2008) and Jarvis' (2008) studies conducted in North West Province and KwaZulu-Natal respectively. Their studies indicated that religious and/or political conservatism amongst teachers in some of the schools in which they conducted their research, negatively influenced how teachers responded to diversity and human rights in the school curriculum (*cf*. Ferguson & Roux 2004; Mattson & Harley 2003) (2.2.2).

The reason for the high positive response rate to including religious and cultural diversity in the school curriculum in this study may be associated with a general shift amongst teachers in South Africa towards affirming diversity. This conclusion is based on the language used by the respondents in their answers to SQ 10. The multicultural reality in urban schools was pointed out by numerous respondents to the survey questionnaire (SQ 11).

Building on SQ 10, SQ 11 required teachers to commit to a position on the extent of their knowledge and pedagogical skilfulness enabling them to include topics on diverse religions and cultures in Life Orientation.

5.4.4 Teachers' perceptions of their own knowledge and skills to include topics on diverse religions and cultures in Life Orientation lessons (SQ 11).

The results of SQ 11 have been tabulated as follows:

- Table 5.8a: themes located in the *YES* responses to the question;
- Table 5.8b: themes located in the *UNSURE* responses;
- Table 5.8c: themes located in the *NO* responses.

Table 5.8a: Question 11 *YES* responses

Question 11: Do you think that you have the knowledge and skills to include topics relating to diverse religions and cultures in your Life Orientation lessons?		
YES N = 25:37 (68%)	NO N = 6:37 (16%)	UNSURE N = 6:37 (16%)
SQ 11 Explanations of *YES* responses (N = 25:37; 68%)		
THEME	**THEMATIC STRUCTURES / evidence from the data**	
SQ. 11#Theme 1: **Teachers have the knowledge and skills: personal agency**	• Teachers have resources; • Teachers have the knowledge or seek the knowledge.	
Respondent 15	"With all the materials and different resources I have, it is possible".	
Respondent 19	"I have internet access and also a fully functional library for my use. I research and prepare my learners' resources myself. We do not use Life Orientation textbooks, we create our own notes".	
Respondent 28	"I believe I have sufficient knowledge to include these in my lessons".	
Respondent 31	"I have a solid frame of reference. Where there are gaps in my knowledge (and there are many) I have the resources to research. I also draw extensively on the skills, knowledge and experiences of my colleagues who represent a great diversity and encourage learners to do the same".	
SQ. 11#Theme 2: **Teachers have knowledge and skills: shaped by context.**	• Acquire knowledge as a consequence of being in a multicultural school. • Draw on personal knowledge and experience of colleagues and learners.	
Respondent 2	"Also gives you knowledge especially if you are in a school with different cultures and religions".	
Respondent 6	"I feel I can have a class discussion using both my knowledge and learners' own experiences, cultures and religions. I would have to be well read, but could do it through self-study and research".	
Respondent 31	"I also draw extensively on the skills, knowledge and experiences of my colleagues who represent a great diversity ….Cover through research of topics. Pupils of various religions conduct class seminars."	
SQ. 11#Theme 3: **Teachers have knowledge and skills**	• Knowledge and skills gained from qualifications.	
Respondent 11	"I have undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Sociology and Anthropology which covered topics in this regard".	
Respondent 23	"I learned about this in my studies. The only thing is to implement".	

Table 5.8b: Question 11 *UNSURE responses*

Q. 11 Explanations of *UNSURE* responses (N = 6: 37; 16%)	
THEME	**THEMATIC STRUCTURES / evidence from the data**
SQ. 11#Theme 4: **My knowledge is basic: personal agency.**	• Knowledge is basic • Engages in research, uses learners.
Respondent 16	"We need to bear in mind that a real LO educator is a lifelong researcher and that means one cannot teach sensitive topics such as religions and cultures without undergoing some research beforehand".
Respondent 29	"I don't have ready knowledge, but it's not a problem to read about it and to convey to learners or to ask learners to research aspects and report back".
SQ. 11#Theme 5: **My knowledge is limited**	• Knowledge is limited • Seem insecure, because there is so much to know.
Respondent 4	"There are so many religious beliefs and cultures, to include topics related to these one must have knowledge on them".
Respondent 14	"My knowledge about various cultures is very basic – what I have read in texts".
Respondent 18	*"*I have very limited knowledge*."*
Respondent 33	"Did some reading on different religions and cultures but don't think I know enough to be able to teach learners*".*

Table 5.8c: Question 11 *NO* responses

Q. 11: Explanations of *NO* responses (N = 6:37; 16%) Since only three of the respondents provided reasons for their *NO* responses, these have been cited below.	
Respondent 12	"I cannot explain in detail other religious cultures, e.g. Shembe, IPHC (acronym for 'International Pentecostal Holiness Church'), ZCC (acronym for 'Zionist Christian Church'*)."*
Respondent 35	"Because we do not have enough resources for this great deal of work".
Respondent 37	"Coming from a Christian background, I realise that what I know about other religions and cultures is embarrassingly little".
Respondents 21, 22 and 34	No explanations given for *NO* selection

Discussion of the findings: SQ 11

***YES* responses.** In 43% (N = 16:37) of the *YES* responses (Table 5.8a) .teachers pointed out that they do have the requisite knowledge and skills to include topics on diverse religions and beliefs, because they have taken responsibility for their own learning by engaging in self study, reading, research and, in some cases, speaking to colleagues. Where there are gaps in their knowledge they attempt to fill these gaps by conducting research (Table 5.8a, SQ11#Theme 1). A few of the teachers stated that they have a personal interest in religions and for this reason are able to address diversity in the classroom.

In at least three of the observations (N = 3:37) (Table 5.8a, SQ 11#Theme 2), teachers explained that their knowledge was gained from teaching in a "multicultural school". In these cases it is if the teachers had no choice but to address the diversity characteristic of their learners (Respondent 2, Table 5.8b). These respondents claimed that they make use of the backgrounds of their learners to construct an appropriate learning environment. These few teachers did not seem to express their own lack of knowledge in deficit terms, but responded positively to their school situations.

At least six (N= 6:37) (Table 5.8a, SQ11#Theme 3) of the respondents specifically stated that they have the knowledge and skills to address diversity, because they had "learned about this" in their studies. Two of these respondents admitted that they nevertheless have difficulty with implementing the content in the classroom.

***UNSURE* responses.** The explanations for the "My knowledge is basic" response (Table 5.8b, SQ11# Theme 4) under the *UNSURE* responses were not that different from the explanations provided for the *YES* responses. Respondents admitted that their knowledge of various religions and cultures is limited (N = 2:6 in this category), but that they are able to deal with topics through self study and research. The respondents (N = 2:6) in this theme provided explanations that were encouraging rather than doubtful or negative.

In the "My knowledge is limited" theme (N = 4:6) (Table 5.8b, SQ11#Theme 5), respondents expressed the opinion that their knowledge is very limited or basic, and were doubtful about including topics on diversity in their Life Orientation classes.

***NO* responses.** Although only six (N = 6:37) of the respondents provided *NO* responses, with three including reasons and three not, the category provides interesting data. Respondent 12 indicated that he did not have detailed knowledge of the Independent Churches. This response hints at the prevalence of the Independent Churches in his school, a point that must be taken up in the PAR phase as an area that should be explored in the community of practice.

Respondent 35 suggested that the available educational resources were inadequate for teaching in the area of the Independent Churches. This response was interesting in view of the fact that the teacher teaches in a formally white school which is well resourced. However, well written readily available resources for the Independent Churches for teachers are difficult to come by. Respondent 37 suggested that his Christian background had inhibited his learning "about other religions and cultures". This response raised an issue that may be true for many teachers in South Africa, viz. that he knows very little about religions other than his own.

In analysing SQ 11, I looked for responses that would express the teachers' sense of *agency*, the sense that they were able to make learning happen, even though they may have been under the impression that their skills and content knowledge about diversity are limited. 57% (N = 21:37) of the respondents expressed a sense of agency which could be detected in the active voice used to express their responses. Examples of such responses included:

- "I am well versed in my own culture and religion; I have gained knowledge about religions as well" [Respondent 9].
- "With all the materials and different resources that I have, it is possible" [Respondent 15].
- "I have internet access and a fully functional library. I research and prepare my learners resources myself" [Respondent 19].

Based on the *NO* responses, an interesting contrast that has emerged from this dataset is the view that resources are available vs. a sense that resources are lacking (*cf.* Table 5.8a, Respondents 15, 19, 31 vs. Table 5.8c, Respondents 12, 35). 24% (N = 9:37) either stated specifically that there is an abundance of resources available, or implied that resources are available, because of the research that they have been able to do on diverse religions and cultures. Although only 11%, which amounts to four of the respondents (N = 4:37), either explicitly pointed out that there are not enough resources available or implied as much, it is possible that resources in places other than in metropolitan areas like Johannesburg and other larger towns and cities are difficult to obtain, including access to the internet, because teachers do not have ready access to it. This should not have been the case in Johannesburg though, although many older teachers are not always computer literate.

In some parts of South Africa, the presence of African Independent churches, including the Church of the Nazarites, the International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC), the Zionist Christian Church (ZCC) and the numerous smaller urban Zionist and Apostolic churches with Pentecostal characteristics are more evident than the "major religions" which take precedence in textbooks, the NCS (DoE 2003: 25) and other support materials (*cf.* DoE 2007: 33). Resources on these African

churches are not as prolific as the resources on “major religions”, and are only touched on briefly, or not included at all in Life Orientation textbooks (*cf.* Rooth, Stielau & Maponyane 2005: 73; Rooth, Stielau, Plantagie & Maponyane 2006, for example)[29]. For inexperienced teachers of Life Orientation, knowledge about the Independent Churches may lie outside of their knowledge base, while for others, because of their background and socio-economic context, such knowledge lies entirely outside of their particular frames of reference. Membership of African Independent Churches is particularly evident in the city of Johannesburg, as well as in the neighbouring smaller towns, one of which was the location for the fieldwork in the PAR phase of this research (6.4). Since membership spills over into schools, universities and the workplace in general, the African Independent Churches should not be overlooked in developing the knowledge base of teachers of Life Orientation (*cf*. 3.4.4.1). This point will be revisited in the PAR phase of the data analysis (cf. 6.4.2.4, FG2#8).

The few *NO* (N = 6) responses will not be dismissed in this analysis simply because they are in the minority. In the spirit of inclusivity, these will be taken up for further exploration in the PAR phase in the community of practice, especially the references to a lack of resources and limited knowledge of certain religions and denominations.

5.4.5 Teachers’ perceptions of their knowledge and skills to handle controversial issues in Life Orientation classes (SQ 12)

The results of SQ 12 have been summarised as follows:

- Table 5.9a: *YES* responses);
- Table 5.9b: *UNSURE* responses; and
- Table 5.9c: *NO* responses.

[29] Life Orientation text books in the series *Focus on Life Orientation*, Maskew Miller Longman (Grades, 10 and 11 respectively).

Table 5.9a: Question 12 *YES* responses

Question 12: Do you believe that you have the knowledge and skills to handle discussions or debates on controversial religious or cultural issues in your Life Orientation classes?		
YES N = 21:37 (57%)	NO N = 5:37 (14%)	UNSURE N = 9:37 (24%)

SQ 12: Explanations of *YES* responses (N = 15:37; 41%)

The *YES* responses in this category had no conditions attached. Two of the *YES* responses did not provide explanations

THEMES	**THEMATIC STRUCTURES / evidence from the data**
SQ.12#Theme 1: **Teachers trained (N = 5:15)**	Teachers are able to handle controversial issues on religions and cultures because they had been trained to do so.
Respondent 11	"Due to my tertiary, not educational training, I believe I have developed the skills and knowledge required".
Respondent 35	"With my background of Bible School I am able to handle some debates and discussions".
SQ. 12#Theme 2: **Teacher knowledge and experience (N = 5:15)**	• Respondents are experienced educators, well researched and knowledgeable. • Teachers should demonstrate good facilitation skills.
Respondent 19	"I could facilitate a class discussion and debate and ensure that it stays within boundaries/limits. Respect will be shown else you will fail as the facilitator".
Respondent 25	"Life experience, skills gained".
Respondent 30	"After 28 years of education in this subject I think I can handle it".
SQ. 12#Theme 3: **Diversity obvious in school (N = 2:15)**	A multicultural school environment is a contributing factor to teacher knowledge.
Respondent 15	"I am fortunate that I teach learners of different races, therefore diversity in terms of religions and cultures is obvious".
Respondent 23	"I live in a diversity of cultures and am aware of what is happening around me. I am able to handle the debates because of knowledge around me".

Table 5.9a (continued)

SQ. 12#Theme 4: **Teacher's attitude (N = 3:15)** **Combined with *UNSURE* responses**	• Important for teacher to keep an open mind; • Willingness to accept all religions; • Teacher needs to be conscious of the sensitivity of certain issues.
Respondent 2	It depends on what religion you are talking about, for example, Satanism. I wouldn't be able to talk about it in any depth. It's a very sensitive topic that needs to be handled with a great deal of sensitivity and must be well planned (translated from original expressed in Afrikaans).
Respondent 7	The teacher should have an open mind and be prepared to "back up" any statements made.
Respondent 9	One is able to if one can accept all religions. As long as openness, unbias, freedom to state and respond is permitted (*sic*).
SQ 12: Explanations of *YES* responses with conditions attached (N = 4:21) These responses were included in the batch of *YES* responses discussed in the themes above (*cf.* Respondent 2 above). Two did not provide explanations for their *YES* responses.	

Table 5.9b: Question 12 *UNSURE* responses

SQ 12: Explanation of *UNSURE* responses (N = 10:37; 27%) NOTE: Two of the *UNSURE* respondents did not have explanations attached.	
THEME	**THEMATIC STRUCTURES / evidence from the data**
SQ. 12#Theme 5: **Depends on the topic: good facilitation skills (N = 2:10)**	• Reservations were expressed because it depends on the topic. • Ground rules need to be set for learners so that discussions do not get out of hand.
Respondent 16	My belief is that the learners need a little bit of a lecture before being engaged in discussions or debates on controversial religious or cultural issues.
Respondent 31	Usually yes (meaning able to deal with controversial topics), where there are knowledge gaps I will ensure that I follow these up. Sometimes it is challenging when learners become highly sensitive or over-emotional and defensive. I try to move the discussion back to a more objective arena and deal with individuals concerned on a on to one basis.
SQ. 12#Theme 6: **Limitations of the teacher (N = 4:10)**	• There are so many beliefs and cultures. Teacher must have knowledge of all of them. • Learners are different in terms of take-up in the LO class. • Limits to how much one can know.

Table 5.9c: Question 12 *NO* responses

SQ. 12: Explanation of *NO* responses (N = 5:37)	
SQ. 12#Theme 7: **More knowledge needed (N = 3:5)**	• Knowledge of "other" religions and cultures tends to be "scanty". • More knowledge is needed on controversial religious or cultural issues. • May avoid controversial issues in the classroom (N = 2 in the data).
Respondent 10	I find most discussions about culture and religion get out of hand when issues are controversial. I have the knowledge but not the skills.
Respondent 28	I avoid being controversial on issues concerning religion, but I do allow learners to voice their opinions on a certain religion during discussions.

Discussion of the findings: SQ 12

The original number of *YES* responses to SQ 12 was N = 21:37 (57%), *NO* responses N = 5:37 (14%) and the *UNSURE* responses N = 9:37 (24%) (Table 5.9a). However, closer examination of the qualifying responses in the open-ended section provided a different picture.

Of the original 21 (N = 21:37) *YES* responses:

- two respondents had not provided explanations for their selected responses;
- two respondents had not answered the question.

In other words, the explanation did not always match the selected response. Hence, the N = 21:37 (57%) is a misleading figure and decreases to N = 17: 37 (46%) if these four are not included.

The N = 21:37 decreases again since four teachers had some conditions attached to their *YES* responses. The number then decreases to N = 13:37 (35%) who answered in clear, unambiguous terms that they have the knowledge and skills to handle discussions and debates on controversial religious or cultural issues.

However, at least two of the *UNSURE* responses reflect the same kinds of explanations given by teachers who had answered *YES* and provided clear explanations as an answer to the question (Table 5.9b). If these are added to N = 13:37, then the *YES* responses increase to N = 15:37 (41%). This number points to the fact that in reality, 41 % of the respondents would be willing and/ or pedagogically able to facilitate discussions on controversial religious or cultural diversity issues in the classroom.

Some of the respondents explained that diversity is obvious in their schools, a situation that encourages debate to take place. One of the respondents in this category pointed out that debates

should stay within certain boundaries or limits. “Respect will be shown else you will fail as the facilitator” (Table 5.9a, SQ12#Theme2, Respondent 19).

Respondents in the category “Teacher a good facilitator” (N = 2:14) (Table 5.9a, SQ12#Theme 5), pointed out that being an educator “commands good facilitation skills”. Two respondents who had selected *UNSURE* had also provided clearly articulated explanations of their ability as facilitators, hence N = 4, of those who emphasise the importance of having good facilitation skills to handle controversial religious and cultural issues in Life Orientation classes. A few of the *UNSURE* responses captured a sense that teachers may not be knowledgeable enough to deal with certain issues, but that it really depends on the topic.

In a few of the *NO* responses the respondents seemed to avoid conflict either by avoiding explosive topics altogether or by outsourcing to more professional people. These are noteworthy responses considering that learning tolerance is integral to Citizenship education. Less than half (N = 15:37; 41%) of the sample, however, could clearly articulate that their content knowledge and skills to deal with controversial issues in the classroom are adequate. This situation raises questions regarding the professional content knowledge of teachers in the domain of Citizenship education, to facilitate every kind of learning about diversity. This knowledge may be factual knowledge about religions and cultures and/or the skilfulness to mediate or facilitate debate, dialogue and discussion in a mutually respectful way.

Diversity is likely to engender conflict. Both Avery (2002: 121) and Gearon (2004: 14ff; *cf*. Barnes 2009) have argued that learning tolerance where diversity is concerned, also means learning about conflict. If Religion education is to find its place in Citizenship education, more than learning *about* beliefs and values is required in the Life Orientation learning area/subject. Gearon (2004: 14) contends that teaching “citizenship through religious education” requires that learners acquire a “political consciousness”. Developing a political consciousness is hinted at in the NCS (DoE 2003a: 9) (“It is important for learners to be politically literate”*)* (*cf.* 2.2.2). Political literacy or consciousness can be learned effectively only if teachers consciously include controversial topics or conflict issues in the classroom. For this reason, the teachers’ agency in facilitating or mediating discussions and debates on difficult or sensitive issues, particularly in Grade 10-12 Life Orientation classes, is paramount for developing an “engaged and enlightened citizenry” (Avery 2002: 115) (*cf*. DoE 2003a: 11). Education in democracy requires learners to confront controversy through substantive discussion and dialogue on social and political issues (Avery 2002: 122; Robertson 2008: 32).

The indications from the data are that some teachers of Life Orientation avoid topics on conflicting views or beliefs to avoid tension or because they do not feel sufficiently knowledgeable to be able

to facilitate discussions on such issues. One of the responses that appeared as an "outlier" in the data, since it was the only one of its kind, is quoted at this point for the contribution it makes to this discussion.

- "I haven't found myself trapped in a complex situation that needs such serious attention". [Respondent 13].

This response raises questions as to the kinds of topics or issues that teachers are prepared to include in Citizenship education. Clearly avoidance of controversial issues will not "develop deliberative capacities" (Robertson 2008: 32) in learners. How teachers approach diversity and learn to manage sensitive and conflicting viewpoints is relevant as an aspect of mutual engagement in a community of practice (3.4.4.3).

5.4.6 Teachers' planning for the inclusion of topics on diverse religions and cultures in Grade 10/11 Life Orientation classes (SQ 13)

Table 5.10a includes a summary of the *YES* responses and Table 5.10b the *NO* responses.

Table 5.10a: Question 13 *YES* responses

Question 13: Have you included, or do you plan to include topics on diverse religions and cultures in your Gr. 10 and/or 11 Life Orientation learning programme in 2007?		
YES N = 30:37 (81%)	NO N = 6:37 (16%)	Did not respond (N = 1 respondent)
SQ 13: Explanation of *YES* responses (N = 30:37; 81%)		
THEME	**THEMATIC STRUCTURES / evidence from the data**	
SQ. 13#Theme 1: **Factual information (N = 24; 65%)**	• Factual information about religions of South Africa; • Lists of religions are provided. These vary amongst the respondents, but generally included Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, African traditional religions. • The topics included main tenets (basic beliefs), rites of passage, religious leaders, special events, symbols, food, clothing.	
Respondent 2	Muslim (*sic*), Hindu, Christianity, Satanism.	
Respondent 7	Different kinds of religions; special events; similarities, differences; different gods, principles, beliefs etc.	
Respondent 15	Different religions (identify); religion: marriage, dress code, food, jewellery; religion and culture; religion: myth, belief or faith.	
Respondent 28	Christianity, Buddhism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, Satanism, Zionism.	

Table 5.10a (continued)

SQ. 13#Theme 2: **Ethical and moral issues** **(N = 7 times in the data)**	• Ethical and moral issues including topical issues such as abortion, religious wars, religion and the environment. • Relationship between "belief systems" and moral behaviour and values. • Ethical and moral issues were, in some cases, stated alongside the factual information on different religions and cultures.
Respondent 3	Values and attitudes; basic beliefs; history or religion; important days; decorations.
Respondent 4	• Grade. 10: Major religions, belief systems unique to South Africa; Ethical traditions; • Grade 11: diversity, moral and ethical dilemmas, moral and spiritual dilemmas.
SQ. 13#Theme 3: **Citizenship issues or concepts.** **(N = 5 times in data)**	• Citizenship issues including diversity, discrimination, human rights, democracy, harmonious living and stereotyping. • Some responses reflect overlaps between the themes (theme 2 and theme 3).
Respondent 16	Human rights; democracy and the Constitution of SA; multi-religions; multiculturalism
Respondent 24	World religions, diverse cultures, human rights.

Table 5.10b: Question 13 *NO* responses

SQ. 13: Elaboration of *NO* responses (N = 6: 37; 16%)	
The *NO* responses were few, but included comments that are worth following up critically in dialogue with colleagues in a community of practice. These explanations were not categorised into themes, since each one is different from the others. These have simply been reproduced as they were stated in the responses.	
Respondent 10	We do not include topics/themes on diverse religions and cultures. I keep to knowledge, skills, values and attitudes which are not too controversial. We want learners to see their own cultural and religious identities in harmony with others.
Respondent 18	I only refer to it (*sic*) [diverse religions and cultures]. Only refer for background. Learners are not interested, they live 'on the edge' from day to day, where they have come from and where they are going to. These days this is outside of their frame of reference. *(*Original in Afrikaans, translated by author*).*
Respondent 22	Our youth are ignoring their cultures. They are even ashamed of it.
Respondent 23	Our year plan includes other topics such as goal setting, self esteem, drugs, citizenship, life role and responsibilities and relationships because of the need and how they affect the learners.
Respondent 34	No knowledge, no training of diverse religions.

Discussion of the findings: SQ 13

81% (N = 30:37) of the respondents stipulated that they had completed a section or were planning to include topics on diverse religions and cultures in their classes in the near future. However, only about half of the respondents (N = 18; 50%) were very specific in terms of listing various kinds of themes or topics to be included in their lessons (Table 5.10a). The other 50% provided vague, non-committal responses. For example, respondents stated that they would include an "overview of religions" and focus on how cultures and traditions are influenced by religion.

Two respondents (N = 2:37) included Satanism in their lists (Respondents 2 and 28). One of these respondents also included Jehovah's Witnesses, "Mormonism" and "Zionism" in her/his list (Respondent 28). This response provided an interesting deviation from the list of "main religions" found in the NCS (Table 5.10a).

Teaching methodologies were mentioned specifically five times by respondents in combination with the lists of content (N = 5:37). These included:

- Debating: on issues such as abortion, the death penalty, conflict in the world such as "the situation in Iraq";
- Collage construction and poster presentation;
  "Looked at six main religions as a collage and poster presentation" [Respondent 14];
- Learners engage in self-study and research; learners answer sets of questions on religions [Respondent 19];
- Learners research and do presentations [Respondent 31].

In four (N = 4; 11%) of the observations, topics on diverse religions and cultures seem to be have been avoided. The avoidance by teachers of content on diverse religions and cultures is problematic in relation to the desired outcomes associated with democratic Citizenship education, for the same reasons as those discussed in relation to SQ 12 above.

5.4.7 Assistance for teachers to improve knowledge of diverse religions and cultures (SQ 14)

This question was included since it would contribute towards how the PAR phase would be organised in the second phase of the empirical research, as well as to determine the views of teachers towards the kind of knowledge they require for Citizenship education/Religion education.
The *YES* responses have been clustered into four themes according to the frequency of the examples given and presented in Table 5.11a. The numbers presented are as they occur in the data, since each could have been in combination with one of the other themes or categories, viz.

information on the tenets of religions and methods of presentation, for example: The *NO* responses have been clustered into three themes and presented in Table 5.11b.

Table 5.11a: SQ 14 *YES* responses

Question 14: Would you like to have assistance with improving your knowledge of diverse religions and cultures in order to teach these sections in the NCS well?	
YES N = 27:37 (73%)	NO N = 10:37 (27%)
THEMES	**THEMATIC STRUCTURES / evidence from the data**
SQ. 14#Theme 1: **Resources on tenets of religions** **(N = 18 times in the data)**	• More literature required, handbooks, resource packs, notes or information on different religions; • Visual resources including DVD/video material, pictures and posters, appropriate websites; • Information includes advice on relevant literature such as books and websites.
SQ. 14#Theme 2: **Methods of presentation** **(N = 6 times in the data)**	• How to present and to make the content interesting for learners; support for teachers in planning and delivery. • Examples of lesson plans. • Specifically pointed out that teachers require resources to handle "religious differences" and "sensitive issues".
Respondent 4 **Respondent 15** **Respondent 29**	SA is a country with many cultures, beliefs and religions. I would like to know more about these religions and ethical traditions, basic tenets in each religion. Sensitive issues that should be handled with care in different religions. How to make this subject more interesting and encourage learners to accept different religious groups. I would appreciate guidance on how to present this topic for five years in a row and still keep it stimulating and desirable.
SQ. 14#Theme 3: **Workshops and seminars** **(N = 6 times in the data)**	• Workshops, seminars or training at a tertiary level on diverse religions and cultures to enhance or increase one's expertise and knowledge; • Workshops about specific topics in different religions; to gain access to resource materials relevant to the issues of religion. • Assistance is required through interaction with others.
SQ. 14#Theme 4: **"All the help we can get"** **(N = 3 times in the data)**	Teachers indicated any kind of assistance would be helpful and appreciated.

Table 5.11b: SQ 14 *NO* responses

THEME	THEMATIC STRUCTURES / evidence from the data
SQ. 14#Theme 5: **Not required (N = 5 times in the data)**	• Respondents adequately knowledgeable in the domain of religions and cultures. • Or take responsibility for preparing very well.
Respondents 7 & 9	I think that I am adequately prepared to discuss various religious/cultural issues as I take the responsibility to prepare for such discussions.
Respondent 9	The key factor, looking at the LO educator, does the educator have an "inclusive" attitude, does the educator accept and respect all other religions as well?
Respondent 32	I would welcome receiving any additional resource material, but there is already so much available.
SQ. 14#Theme 6: **Time is a limiting factor (N = 3 times in the data)**	• Respondents adequately prepared for the limited time assigned to Citizenship education in the learning programme guidelines and hence Religion education in the Life Orientation curriculum. • Do not need to increase their knowledge. Examples: o The curriculum is so extensive that one cannot include too much time on one topic only. o Struggle to find additional time. I have access to extensive research. I have access to people of various faith communities for consultation.
SQ. 14#Theme 7: **"Ours is a Christian school" (N = 1)**	• Being in a Christian school, the majority are Christian learners and parents. No reason for influencing them. Against the culture of the majority of the parents [Respondent 34].

Discussion of the findings: SQ 14

The analysis of the *YES* responses revealed some of the difficulties encountered by teachers in relation to the practice of Citizenship education/Religion education. These responses were not necessarily negative. Three areas that require attention and support seem to be evident in the responses.

(i) The first indicates that there is a need for resources and materials on the tenets of religions, including notes, information on literature itself and visual resources. This theme occurs overwhelmingly more than others in the data, indicating the need to increase content knowledge (Table 5.11a, SQ14#Theme 1).

(ii) The second entails ways of presentation of the content so that Religion education does not become boring and repetitive, or guidelines are needed on how to keep learners interested. This second area also entails ways of presentation of sensitive issues (Table 5.11a, SQ14#Theme 2).

(iii) The third entails the need for workshops or seminars, suggesting some form of physical, face-to-face learning context to assist teachers in acquiring the requisite knowledge to perform effectively (Table 5.11a, SQ14#Theme 3/4). My contention is that an increase in the teachers' professional knowledge base will enable the teachers to present content on diverse religions and cultures in interesting and creative ways, so as not to be "boring and repetitive" as noted in (ii) above.

Although the *NO* responses comprised less than one third of the responses for SQ 14 (Table 5.11 and b, N = 10: 37%), these responses would be taken seriously alongside the *YES* responses in considering the shared domain of interest in a community of practice. In at least three (N = 3:37) of the observations, respondents indicated that they did not require assistance to increase their knowledge of religions, because there are other areas in the Life Orientation curriculum that require more time and attention. On the grounds that Life Orientation as a whole covers so many different kinds of content knowledge (viz. Personal wellbeing, Physical education, human rights, health promotion, careers), some of the respondents suggested that there is not enough time to spend on Religion education, therefore no need to know "any more than I already know". Even though there were a few comments only pertaining to time in these observations, it is interesting to note that some teachers had linked time and the depth of knowledge necessary to teach effectively. It is also interesting that some teachers seemed to have confined the need to broaden their knowledge of religions and cultures to the time allocated in the NCS to a single outcome (8% of the total amount of time allocated to Life Orientation in a week, *cf.* DoE 2007: 8). Knowledge of religions, beliefs and cultures and how these dimensions of life influence other aspects of life (health, fitness, recreation and career choices) do not seem to have filtered down into some teachers' understanding of the professional knowledge base required for effective learning and teaching in a multicultural society.

The response: "Being in a Christian school, the majority are Christian learners and parents. No reason for influencing them. Against the culture of the majority of the parents" [Respondent 34] occurred only once in relation to this particular sample. Yet it is worth noting since there will in all likelihood be other schools where similar views are expressed, given South Africa's social-political history (4.3.3.2) (*cf.* Jarvis 2008; Du Preez 2008).

5.5 KEY FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

The findings in this section are relevant for further investigation in the PAR phase of the study (Chapter 6):

- More than half of the respondents to the survey qualified as teachers before 1994, when Religious education was dominated by Christianity and confessional (Table 5.2).

- 89% of the teachers who participated in the survey are Christian, representing at least eleven different churches, including the NGK, Anglican, Methodist, Roman Catholic, the Zionist Christian Church and the Grace Bible Church. There was greater evidence of diversity in the Christian backgrounds of the teachers in this sample than diversity in terms of different religions. The only other religion represented in the sample was Hinduism (N = 3). One participant was affiliated to any religion (Table 5.2).
- Of the 37 respondents, 57% (N = 21:37) indicated that their initial qualifications had included courses in religion. However, closer scrutiny of the data reveals that in only 32% (N = 12:37) of the observations, could "religion" be interpreted as a study of *different* religions and cultures. Approximately 46% (N = 17:37) of the respondents indicated that their undergraduate qualifications had not prepared them to teach for diversity (Tables 5.4a and 5.4b).
- 30% of the respondents (N = 11:37) had taken Biblical Studies as an academic major in their undergraduate or postgraduate studies. Religious studies, or a study of different religions, was included as a unit or module of Biblical Studies for only five (N = 5:37; 14%) of the respondents.
- It seemed that the older the respondent, the more likely it was that he/she had taken Biblical Studies as an academic major and not Religious Studies. The offering of Biblical Studies was in keeping with the standard practice for teacher education in various universities in South Africa during the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s.
- 46% (N = 17:37) of the respondents indicated that the courses they had taken at a college of education or university had not prepared them to manage religious and cultural diversity in the classroom. The reason for this is because Biblical Studies in many colleges of education and universities was not based on an inclusive epistemology.
- 78% of respondents indicated that they had attended INSET (Table 5.6a), yet only 51% said they felt adequately prepared to teach Life Orientation having attended INSET (Table 5.6c). Only 35% said that a section on religions and cultures had been included in INSET programmes (Table 5.6d).
- In spite of less than 60% of the respondents admitting either directly or indirectly that their undergraduate courses had not provided them with the knowledge base for diversity, the general inclination towards including diverse religions and cultures in Life Orientation was evident. This positive trend was demonstrated in the high response rate to the questions that required teachers to indicate how they felt about including content on diverse religions and cultures in Life Orientation (5.4.3.1, 5.4.3.2; Table 5.7; Tables 5.10a, b).

Department of Education (DoE) teacher development programmes for Life Orientation conducted between 2004 and 2007 had focused primarily on the technical aspects of the curriculum, seemingly not contributing to improving content knowledge and skills pertaining to any of the Life

Orientation focus areas, including Religion education. 48% (N = 16:29) of the respondents who had participated in INSET programmes between 2004 and 2007 indicated that the programmes had not included content on diverse religions and cultures. 19% of the entire sample (N = 7:37) did not respond to this question in the survey because they had not attended INSET at all (Table 5.6a). The result is that 62% of the respondents (N = 23:37) in this sample, would be teaching an aspect of Citizenship education without having had any formal learning experiences in this focus area. The 38% (N = 14:37) of respondents who indicated that diverse religions, cultures and beliefs had been included in the INSET programmes that they had attended explained that content had been "brief", "in no detail", "only mentioned", and in one case "we were given a lot of posters to explain different religions" (Table 5.6d).

Although 57% (N = 21:37) of the respondents maintained that religion formed part of their undergraduate and/or postgraduate studies, some form of Religious Studies had been included for only 32% (N = 12:37) of the respondents. Hence, those respondents who said they felt prepared because of the influences from their qualifications to manage teaching and learning about different religions and cultures also amounted to 32% (N = 12:37). The mediating variable viz. the type of religion to which respondents had been exposed, contributed to whether or not teachers said they would manage diversity in Life Orientation. It is interesting to note, however, that although only one third of the respondents (32%) had been exposed to diverse religions in some way in their initial qualifications, this does not seem to have been a factor in contributing towards discrimination or exclusion of content on diversity amongst this sample, as indicated by the responses to SQ 10, 11 and 13 (5.4.3, 5.4.4, 5.4.6).

In spite of the limited exposure to diversity and diversity-related issues in their professional qualifications and in DoE INSET programmes, the survey indicates that more than 80% of the respondents in this sample (N = 30:37) (SQ 10) were affirming of religious diversity in Life Orientation classes and more than 80% were planning to include topics on religious and cultural diversity in forthcoming lessons at the time of completing the survey. In spite of the lack of training, many of the respondents appeared to be coping in this area, because of their own efforts at researching topics and their personal interest and attitudes towards knowing about diverse religions. The language used by teachers in their responses (*cf.* SQ 10) indicates some understanding of the relationship between Citizenship education and Religion education. For example, reference was made to the "right to freedom of religion", "tolerance", "sensitivity towards others", "knowledge and understanding of others", "understanding and respecting the values, cultures and rights of other citizens" (5.4.3.1; 5.4.3.2).

5.6 CORRELATIONS BETWEEN VARIABLES IN THE SURVEY DATA

5.6.1 The extent of the correlations between the variables

Following is a summary of the actual frequencies pertaining to the variables:

Independent Variable	Frequency	Dependent Variable
Age of respondents	83% in AGC 31 years +	68%: *YES* had knowledge and skills to teach for diversity (SQ 11; Table 5.8a)
Religious affiliation	89% Christian	68%: *YES* had knowledge and skills to teach for diversity. (SQ 11; Table 5.8a)
Undergraduate/ postgraduate qualifications: Courses completed in religion	32% included diverse religions	32%: *YES* to being prepared because of UG studies. Yet 68% feel they have knowledge and skills for diversity.
INSET	78% attended	51%: *YES* prepared to teach LO in general. (SQ 9; Table 5.6c)
INSET included diverse religions	35% included 43% did not include 19% did not respond	68%: *YES* to teaching for diversity. (SQ 11: Table 5.8a)

5.6.2 Post-survey observations: assumed correlations and actual findings

In this section each of my initial assumptions is reviewed in relation to the actual frequencies in the data.

(i) **Assumption**: the higher the Age-group category of the respondents, the more likely it would be that they would *not* feel that they were prepared to teach for diversity, because many teachers would have been subjected to the influences of Christian National education.

RESULT: ACG 31+	**83%**	**68%**	Claim to have knowledge and skills to teach diversity

- **Result**: this result proved my initial assumption incorrect for this sample. More teachers said they felt prepared to include religious and cultural diversity than originally anticipated.

(ii) **Assumption**: Religious affiliation would influence feeling prepared to teach religious and cultural diversity.

RESULT: Christian **89%**	**68%** Have knowledge and skills to teach diversity. **81%** Had or were still planning to include such diversity in the curriculum that year (2007)

- **Result**: the assumption that religious affiliation would have a negative effect on teaching for diversity was also proven incorrect. In spite of the 89% who claimed some Christian affiliation, 68% indicated having the knowledge and skills to teach for diversity and 81% were either planning or had already completed a section on religious and cultural diversity.

(iii) **Assumption**: there would be a correlation between undergraduate/postgraduate qualifications and feeling prepared to teach religious and cultural diversity.

RESULT: Religious diversity in under-graduate courses **32%**	Undergraduate studies had prepared respondents **32%**

- **Result**: perfect correlation, related to the mediating variable. Those who had covered religious diversity in their undergraduate studies also felt prepared to teach for diversity.

(iv) **Assumption**: attendance at INSET did not contribute towards feeling prepared to teach religious and cultural diversity.

RESULT: Attendance at INSET **78%**	**51%** prepared to teach by LO INSET **68%** have knowledge and skills to teach diverse religions and beliefs (Why? Reasons given?). **57%** Knowledge and skills to teach controversial issues on diverse religions and beliefs **81%** will include in LO planning **73%** still need assistance to teach better.

- **Result**: in spite of the fact that the majority fell into Age-group category 31+, and are Christians, only 51% felt ready to teach LO in general as a result of attending INSET, 68% still felt prepared to include religious and cultural diversity, 95% thought it a good idea to include such diversity and 81% had either already included or planned to include topics on religious and cultural diversity in their LO lessons.

A question that would need to be asked in relation to the data is: what influenced 68% of the respondents to respond positively to including religious and cultural diversity in Life Orientation in spite of their inadequate training? It seems that the reasons for the variances may lie with the responses to SQ 10, in which respondents were overwhelmingly positive towards including topics or themes on diverse religions and cultures in Life Orientation. 95% of the respondents answered positively to SQ 10.

5.7 REFLECTIONS ON THE FINDINGS IN THE SURVEY DATA

The survey data indicate that the teachers in the sample were generally affirming of diversity and were willing to include topics on religious and cultural diversity in their Life Orientation classes. However, if the survey responses are interrogated in relation to the literature on trends in research on Religious education pedagogy and more recently on citizenship education pedagogy in other countries (*cf*. Grimmitt 1994, 2008; Jackson 1997, 2004a, 2004b; Ipgrave 2001; Gearon 2004; Bakker & Heimbrock (eds.) 2007; Baumfield 2010; Stern 2010), it is clear that this is an area of real concern for Citizenship education/Religion education in South Africa (*cf*. 2.2.2, 2.2.3). The following points were derived from the open-ended questions of the survey questionnaire and were used to identify concerns and possibilities in terms of the epistemological positions and professional content knowledge of teachers towards Citizenship education/Religion education. These areas were also used to formulate the guides for the focus group interviews/discussions in the PAR phase of the research (*cf*. 6.4):

- The limited knowledge of Citizenship education and religious diversity demonstrated by DoE Life Orientation subject facilitators in INSET programmes resulted in fragmented and limited representations of religions, beliefs and cultures. In addition, the way in which the INSET programmes were conducted possibly resulted in missed opportunities, when teachers could have raised questions concerning the finer nuances of diversity, such us the relationship between “religion” and “culture” (*cf.* 6.4.2, PAR Stage 2, FGI 2).
- Limited scope was given to Religion education in presentations of Life Orientation in INSET programmes. Some teachers wrote that no attention was paid to exposing them to appropriate and innovative teaching strategies in INSET programmes leaving them feeling uninspired in the classroom.
- The fragmented and disconnected INSET programmes, ranging from a day or two to five-day programmes in which the focus may have been on arbitrary topics such as “bias” and “stereotyping”, have not effectively contributed to extending the knowledge base of teachers for Citizenship education/Religion education.
- The ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to religion in the curriculum, viz. Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, African traditional religions and possibly Bahai poses problems for teachers where these religions are not represented at all in some parts of

South Africa. Consequently, under-qualified teachers may run the risk of presenting this list of religions in reified terms as if there are no other religions or beliefs, and no diversity within either, the denominations within Christianity, for example. Local experiences of religions, new religious movements, alternate spiritualities and people who do not follow any institutionalised religion are in jeopardy of being ignored or misrepresented by teachers who have not had adequate exposure to formal Religious Studies in some way.

- Based on the few references to teaching and learning strategies mentioned in the surveys, even well-meaning teachers are in danger of entrenching reified views of religions, practices and traditions. The poster presentations and collage-making activities described by a few of the respondents fall into this category.
- The numbers of respondents who provided *NO* responses to questions pertaining to whether or not respondents had any formal tuition or meaningful INSET in diversity of religions or belief is significant: in every case more than 50% of the sample. The numbers of respondents who did not respond at all to various questions in the survey cannot be overlooked, the reason being that when these are added to the *NO* responses, the numbers of teachers who do not have any training in religious and cultural diversity, or seem not to have an opinion on including religious and cultural diversity, is a concern. The reasons for the *NO* responses to certain questions on the questionnaire would be worth exploring in the PAR phase of the inquiry.
- The affirmations of religious and cultural diversity expressed in SQ 10, 11, 13 and 14 would serve as a starting point for the PAR phase.

These observations as well as other key themes derived from the survey will be explored in the qualitative phase of this research in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH IN A SEQUENTIAL TRANSFORMATIVE MIXED METHODS RESEARCH DESIGN

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the QUAL phase of the mixed methods sequential design. In the previous chapter the data obtained from the survey questionnaire were presented. The survey provided the data which formed the thematic basis of the purely qualitative research process (*cf.* 4.2.4; 4.4). The survey questionnaire also provided a compact view of a sample of Life Orientation teachers and the extent of their professional knowledge base for teaching and learning religious and cultural diversity in Citizenship education. This chapter foregrounds the research questions (1.5) that have given this study its scope, in the design of the qualitative phase in particular:

- How would participation by teachers in a community of practice contribute towards improving their knowledge base for effective practice of Citizenship education in which Religion education is a key component?
- To what extent do Life Orientation teachers conceive Religion education as being a vehicle for promoting democratic values of inclusion, equality, tolerance, mutual respect, reciprocity and social justice?
- How effective is teacher participation in a community of practice for knowledge creation for diversity?
- How effective is a community of practice approach to teacher development for alerting teachers to local experiences of religious and cultural diversity as a resource?
- How effective is participatory action research as a strategy of inquiry for teacher professional development?

The chapter is structured as follows:

- The thematic range as determined from the data in the survey questionnaire is presented;
- An overview of the data analysis procedures for the PAR phase is presented;
- The analysis and interpretation of the PAR phase follows, stage by stage;
- The chapter concludes with a summary of the main findings and reflections on PAR as a strategy of inquiry for teacher professional development.

6.2 THE THEMATIC RANGE IN THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

The QUAN phase provided the substance of the thematic range pursued in more depth in the PAR phase. Key themes identified in the findings of the QUAN phase were the following:

(i) Teacher qualifications to provide the knowledge base for effective learning and teaching Citizenship education/Religion education [SQ 7].
(ii) The efficacy of INSET programmes for extending the knowledge base for Citizenship education/Religion education [SQ 8-9].
(iii) Teacher perspectives on including religious and cultural diversity in Citizenship education [SQ 10, 11, 12].
(iv) The value or importance attached to including religious and cultural diversity in Citizenship education [SQ 11-14].
(v) Problems experienced in the Life Orientation learning area/subject: time allocation; resources (textbooks) [SQ 9, 13, 14].
(vi) Teachers' social context, religion or belief and frame of reference and their influence on the choice of content and approach to Citizenship education/Religion education [SQ 1-7, 10].

6.3 ANALYSIS, SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA IN THE PAR PHASE

In keeping with the narrative analysis applied to the qualitative data obtained from the PAR phase, a narrative style has been adopted in the writing up of the PAR process (Henning *et al* 2004: 112; Elliot 2005: 152; Gubrium & Holstein 2009: 15). The PAR phase has in itself produced a narrative out of which sub-narratives emerged, those being the personal narratives of the teacher-participants. These personal narratives were interpreted in relation to the research questions and theoretical framework (*cf.* Flick 2006: 315). The participatory approach to the research called for a "thick" description, explanation (Henning *et al* 2004: 62) and interpretation of the data, given the close contact between the participants and the researcher (*cf.* 1.10). To reiterate, the narrativised responses to the interview questions were kept intact as far as this was possible during the analysis process, since the narratives were the means by which the participants organised their thoughts on experiences, events, beliefs and values (*cf.* 4.6.3.3) (Henning *et al* 2004: 63; Elliot 2005: 38). The language and wording of the participants were maintained, but tidied where necessary for clarity, in an attempt to capture something of the context and "culture" of the participants (Henning *et al* 2004: 63; Gubrium & Holstein 2009: 15; *cf.* Holliday 2002: 12). I also took cognizance of two points made by Gubrium and Holstein (2009: 27), viz. (i) that narratives are "interactionally constructed for the purposes at hand", and (ii) that it is necessary to look outside

the story itself for “traces of the interactional environment that informs the narratives that emerge” (ibid: 47) in data.

The broader narrative began with the data collected in the biographical sections of the survey questionnaire and Focus Group Interview 1 (6.4.1.3). These data provided the information to compose “word portraits” (Henning *et al* 2004: 111; *cf.* Elliot 2005: 10) (4.6.3.3; 6.4.1.4 (i)) of each of the participants who were the critics of DoE INSET activities and the commentators on, and narrators of, experiences of diversity in the “situatedness” of their own particular social contexts (*cf.* Gubrium & Holstein 2009: 47 (i) above). The general perspective on Life Orientation in the school curriculum obtained from the survey questionnaires was narrowed down to the particular experiences and perceptions of the three teachers who participated in the PAR phase. Each participant consequently provided examples of religious and cultural diversity useful for developing the domain of interest and the shared repertoire, (*cf.* 3.4.4.1, 3.4.4.5) as these pertained to their particular social contexts and classroom experiences.

6.4 PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH STAGES

As was outlined in Chapter 4.4.2 (Figure 4.2), the PAR phase was planned in six stages. The six stages consisted of a cycle of planning, action, observation and reflection, with variations according to the progress in the research, and is presented as such. The following matrix serves as a guide for the way in which the stages have been presented throughout the chapter:

- Planning: including the plan of action, rationale and procedure for each stage;
- Word portraits of the context in which the PAR meetings took place;
- Word portraits of each of the participants (Stage 1 only);
- Plan of action: the data collection method/s;
- Data analysis process;
- A summary and display of the themes and thematic structures located in the data, followed by,
- Further analysis of the data associated with each PAR stage.

Interpretive commentary and personal reflections intersperse or follow each stage in keeping with researcher reflexivity, a characteristic of PAR (*cf.* Elliot 2005: 153).

6.4.1 Stage 1: Introduction to the research project

Date of meeting: 6th March, 2008

6.4.1.1 Overview of the start-up meeting and context of the research

Stage 1 of the PAR phase comprised a start-up meeting in which the project was introduced to the participants. The meeting was held at a secondary school in one of the Gauteng districts with which contact had been made through a Department of Education subject advisor. Three teachers arrived to attend the meeting, one from the school at which the meeting was being held (School A)[30], which is situated in an area that had been designated for Coloured[31] people according to the Population Register and Group Areas Act of the apartheid era. Another of the participants teaches at a school situated in a neighbouring township area (School B) which had been designated for black African people. The third teaches in a former white Afrikaans-medium school that is now multi-ethnic and dual medium (English and Afrikaans) (School C). It is necessary to mention these differences in social contexts since these contributed significantly to the interpretation of diversity and the citizenship concepts central to this study. The ethnic identity that characterised the areas in which the participants reside has hardly changed since the Group Areas Act was repealed in June 1991[32].

6.4.1.2 Planning: rationale and procedure

The start-up meeting would serve two purposes: (i) to gain the trust of the teachers and to motivate them to participate in the research; and (ii) to obtain information regarding the teachers' positions in their respective schools and the extent of their knowledge of the four focus areas of Life Orientation (*cf.* 1.3). The reason for focusing initially on all four focus areas was to determine the level of interest amongst the participants towards Citizenship education as a whole, particularly in the light of the focus areas covered in INSET reported on in the survey questionnaire responses (*cf.* SQ 9.2, 9.3).

A characteristic of PAR is that all project information must be shared, discussed and evaluated with the participants (Cohen & Manion 1994: 192; Chiu 2003: 178; Mertens 2009: 297). The following were therefore shared and discussed:

- The aims of the proposed study: the research questions, particularly the emphasis on teacher knowledge concerning religion in public education.
- The research procedure, viz. the nature and purpose of the survey questionnaire in relation to the action research phase.

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[30] In order to preserve the anonymity of the participant teachers and their schools, the schools will be referred to as Schools A, B and C.

[31] As noted in 4.3.2, the appellations black, coloured, white and Indian have not been used in a derogatory way, but to indicate the legacy of the Population Register and the Group Areas Act associated with the apartheid era.

[32] SA History Archive http://www.saha.org.za/news/2010/April/Freedom (retrieved 5 July 2010)

- Participatory action research as a research genre and the teachers' role in the cyclical process as co-researchers.
- The community of practice concept and the value of adopting a research stance (PAR) in relation to the concept of ongoing collaboration and research between Life Orientation teachers once the project was over (*cf.* 2.3.3; *cf.* Afdal 2007).

Once this information had been conveyed to, and discussed with the participants, a consent form (Appendix III) outlining the nature and purpose of the research was presented to the participants to sign. The participants were assured that the name of their district, the names of their schools and their individual identities would remain anonymous. Their anonymity would be honoured in the research report and in any publications that would ensue from the project. Pseudonyms have been assigned to protect the anonymity of each of the participants: School A: Rochelle; School B: Phumzile / Teacher P; School C: Tlaletso / Teacher T.

6.4.1.3 **Plan of action**: **Focus Group Interview/Discussion (FGI 1)** **(APPENDIX IV**: **Interview guide 1)**

The first of the series of focus group interviews/discussions was conducted at this stage. Data obtained from this interview would be analysed and shared with the teacher participants during the follow-up meeting in Stage 2 (6.4.2). This strategy indicates the iterative nature of the research process, as ideas extracted from the data captured from the survey and FGI 1 would be shared and reflected upon in subsequent stages of the inquiry to validate the research process (*cf.* Fetterman 1998: 92).

The three participants had completed the survey questionnaire (*cf.* 4.3.1; Chapter 5). FGI 1 also included a schedule that participants were required to complete (Table 6.1). This schedule was based on teachers having attended Department of Education INSET programmes and was designed to obtain an overview of the policies and focus areas which had been covered in INSET sessions. Tlaletso and Phumzile had attended INSET during 2005 and 2006 respectively and were able to complete the schedule. Rochelle could not answer any of these questions as she had been appointed to Life Orientation only in 2008, after the official INSET for the FET had been completed.

The schedule was partially linked to the themes that contributed to the thematic range derived from the survey questionnaire (*cf.* 6.2), but focused specifically on what FET Life Orientation teachers had been exposed to during the INSET. A summary of the responses from the two participants follows in Table 6.1 (6.4.1.4 (ii)).

6.4.1.4 Data analysis, process of data reduction and presentation

(i) Word portraits of the participant teachers

The purpose of the word portraits was to capture the "situatedness" of the participants as members of the emerging community of practice. The personal histories and experiences, social contexts, ethnic and/or religious backgrounds of the participants will contribute to knowing the extent of the existing knowledge base of this sample of teachers (*cf*. 5.3) and their propensity to including religious and cultural diversity in the classroom. In addition, the biographies of the teachers are likely to contribute to the domain of interest and shared repertoire of a Citizenship education/Religion Education community of practice (3.4.4.1, 3.4.4.5) (*cf*. Van der Want (ed.) 2009; Cochran-Smith 2004: 15; Lave & Wenger 1991).

Portrait 1 ~ Rochelle School A

Rochelle falls into the age-group category 40-49 years (*cf.* 5.3). Her ethnic designation is "Coloured" and her school, School A, is situated in what formally would have been designated a "Coloured township". School A is dual medium: learners are taught in either English or Afrikaans. Her home language is English, but she is also fluent in Afrikaans. She obtained a Higher Diploma in Education, a four-year qualification at a college of education. Her major subjects were Afrikaans, Mathematics and History. A further qualification was obtained at a Bible College. Her courses included counselling, youth ministry and World Religions. Rochelle taught Life Orientation to three Grade 10 classes at her school and also Grade 12 Mathematics. She was appointed Head of the Department of Life Orientation shortly before the commencement of this research project. In response to the question on religious or spiritual orientation, Rochelle indicated that she is a Christian in the Reformed tradition and an active member of her church community. Although there is strong evidence of Christianity in her neighbourhood, judging by the number of different churches observed in the area, there is also evidence of Islam as noted in the Muslim religious attire of some boys and men whom I observed when driving through the area. Rochelle confirmed that there was a small number of Muslim learners in her school. The learner population of School A continues to be predominantly "Coloured", but the school is multi-ethnic these days.

It had been Rochelle's choice to teach Life Orientation, because she was an experienced youth counsellor and had developed a good relationship with young people in the community.

Portrait 2 ~ Phumzile School B

Phumzile falls into the age-group category 40-49 years (*cf*. 5.3). His home language is seTswana, but he communicates well in English. His school, School B, is situated in a township area. He obtained a Bachelor of Education degree, a four year teacher qualification. His major subjects were English and History. Phumzile also obtained a Bachelor of Education (B. Ed) (Honours) degree in

which he completed modules in Philosophy and Guidance. He was responsible for five Grade 12 Life Orientation classes and Grade 12 Mathematics at his school. In response to the question on religious or spiritual orientation, Phumzile said that he is a Christian, more specifically a “lapsed Seventh Day Adventist”. All of the learners in School B were resident in this township and were mainly seTswana speaking although, according to Phumzile, there were also isiXhosa and isiZulu speaking learners.

Phumzile had been asked by his Head of Department (HoD) to teach Life Orientation. His school had also sent him on courses. He was not sure why he was chosen specifically to teach Life Orientation, but thinks it may have been because he has “the personality”.

Portrait 3 ~ Tlaletso School C

Tlaletso falls into the age-group category 50+ (*cf.* 5.3). She obtained a Primary Teachers’ Diploma at a college of education, which was a two-year qualification associated with Bantu education in the apartheid era. Later she obtained a further diploma in education at the Soweto College of Education which entailed an additional four years of study. She also took an additional course at a Bible School which included Biblical Studies, marriage and youth counselling and a few modules on different religions. She was responsible for eleven Life Orientation classes from Grades 8 to12 and also Arts and Culture at her school.

School C is situated about 5km outside a small town amongst the farms and nature reserves that characterise the region. This is some 45km away from the other two schools. The school was formally a white Afrikaans-medium school, well-known for its boarding facilities. It is dual-medium now and the learners are multi-ethnic. The learners live in this town, on the farms, in the cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria, and also in other states including Botswana and Zimbabwe. Tlaletso’s duties at school included hostel supervision after school and in the evenings. As a result she stayed in the school hostel during the week and returned home to her family only over weekends and during the school holidays. Tlaletso is a registered netball umpire and coached the school’s netball teams. Prior to her obtaining her post at School C, she had lived and taught in a township not too far from the township in which School B is situated, where she had taught Afrikaans Second language. “Afrikaans was fading away from schools [viz. the township schools] so I was given Life Orientation instead”. Life Orientation was “introduced with HIV/AIDS” and she felt that she could not “speak boldly about sex etc”, so resigned. She started coaching netball at various different schools as a source of income. Her present school (School C) offered her a position as netball coach, but she was eventually offered a permanent appointment teaching Life Orientation. “I asked, why should I teach this subject? Then I discovered the relevance and got excited”.

In response to the question on religious or spiritual orientation in the survey questionnaire, Tlaletso indicated that she is a Christian. She serves as a pastor in her church and is actively involved in church activities in the same township in which School B is situated. She is highly respected as a church leader in the community and deeply committed to bringing women together from different African church denominations for services and prayer meetings.

(ii) Summary of responses to the schedule

Table 6.1: **Schedule - Focus Group Interview 1**

POLICY/ TOPICS/CONCEPTS COVERED IN INSET	**YES**	**NO**	**COMMENTS**
(1) Policy: • National Policy on Religion & Education		Teacher P Teacher T	
• Policy on religion in the school		Teacher P Teacher T	
• Religion as focus area in Life Orientation		Teacher P Teacher T	
(2) Citizenship education	Teacher P Teacher T		
(3) Recreation and Physical Education	Teacher P Teacher T		In passing In passing
(4) Career and Career Choices	Teacher P Teacher T		
(5) Human rights in education	Teacher P Teacher T		Children's rights The Constitution
(6) Values in the curriculum	Teacher P Teacher T		Had participated in *Valued Citizens Project* (run by NGO). Not much in INSET.
(7) Diverse religions and beliefs		Teacher P Teacher T	
(8) Explanations of terms from NCS: • "indigenous belief systems"; • "ethical traditions"; • "bias and discrimination"	Teacher P Teacher T	Teacher P Teacher T	NGO: *Valued Citizens*
• "Tolerance"	Teacher P Teacher T		NGO: *Valued Citizens*
• "Stereotyping"	Teacher P Teacher T		NGO: *Valued Citizens*

Interpretive commentary

An analysis of the schedule represented in Table 6.1 indicates that INSET programmes had focused on the structure of Life Orientation in the NCS (*cf.* DoE 2003), viz. the focus areas of Life Orientation, and other related concepts, such as human rights and values in education. One of the

areas central to Citizenship education, viz. content on diverse religions and beliefs, had not been included in the INSET sessions that these two teachers had attended (*cf.* SQ 9.4, 5.4.2). The fragmented way in which aspects of the NCS were presented in INSET in general, as noted by teachers in the survey questionnaire (SQ 9.2), was re-emphasized by these participants (Table 6.1, teachers' commented*,* "in passing"*)*. In the focus group discussion the two teachers verified that Citizenship education, human rights and values in education had not been discussed in any depth. Both teachers had indicated on the schedule that they had not been exposed to policy on religion in education either. The most significant and coherent exposure to values and human rights was through participation in the "Valued Citizens Programme" (an NGO-run programme) which had been conducted at selected schools in Gauteng a year or so previously. Based on the feedback from the teachers, it appeared that they had not continued to draw on the "Valued Citizens" intervention in their classes.

6.4.2 **Stage 2**: **action and reflection**
Date of meeting: **19th March, 2008**

6.4.2.1 **Rationale and procedure**

Stage 2 was devoted entirely to an in-depth focus group interview/discussion.

6.4.2.2 **Plan of action**: **Focus Group Interview/Discussion 2 (FGI 2)**
(APPENDIX V: **Interview Guide 2)**

The interview guide for this focus group was constructed from the perspective of the thematic range of the survey questionnaire, but with a view to probing for more detailed and personal responses to questions similar to those formulated in the survey. The contents of the interview were shared with the participants in the PAR Stage 3 (6.4.3).

The following questions from the survey questionnaire informed the formulation of the interview guide (*cf.* 6.2):

- The initial qualifications of teachers (SQ 5) (SQ 7).
- Attendance at INSET workshops between 2004 and 2007 (SQ 9).
- The teachers' perceptions concerning their preparation for teaching and learning Life Orientation (SQ 9.3).
- The topics included in Life Orientation INSET programmes (SQ 9.2, 9.4).
- The teachers' attitudes towards including religious and cultural diversity in Life Orientation and the extent of the teachers' knowledge base (SQ 9.4, 10 -14).

6.4.2.3 Data analysis procedure

According to Stewart & Shamdasani (1990: 103), the detail in the analysis of focus group interviews or discussions depends on the purpose of the research. The data in this interview were analysed to contribute to the thematic range located in the survey questionnaire (QUAN → QUAL) (*cf.* 6.2). New themes were sought as these pertained to the specific social contexts and experiences of the three participants as well as for constructing the domain of interest for a Citizenship education/Religion education community of practice. My personal reflections as the researcher on the group interviews formed part of the interpretation (Mertens 2009: 81, 243).

As was pointed out in Chapter 4, the focus groups yielded two types of responses, viz. narrative and commentary (4.9.1; 4.9.2). Both types of responses reflected the participants' opinions and/or interpretations of certain events or personal experiences both inside the classroom and outside of it (6.3). It was necessary to retain the theme or key topic in the context of the narrative or commentary in order to bring out its meaning (Kvale 1996: 192) (*cf*. 4.7.4; 4.7.5; 4.7.6). Ten themes were identified in the analysis of FGI 2. Various sub-themes were identified in the key themes. The analyses and interpretive commentary only have been presented in the body of this chapter, with the original narratives and commentary placed in Appendix VI.

6.4.2.4 Analysis and interpretation of Focus Group Interview/Discussion 2

FG2 + #Theme Code	**Label**: **narrative or commentary + Code assigned to theme**
FG Question	Why are you teaching Life Orientation?
FG2#1	Narrative: Why participants are Life Orientation teachers (*cf.* SQ 1).

The responses to this question yielded three narrativised accounts as to why the participants were teaching Life Orientation. The responses have been partly added to the word portraits included in PAR Stage 1 (6.4.1.4).

Interpretive commentary

The common response that emerged from these accounts was that not one of the three participants had been trained to teach Life Orientation specifically. All three fell into age-group categories 40-49 and 50+, meaning that they had completed their studies before the new national curriculum containing Life Orientation was introduced in 2003 (DoE 2003a). The participants' qualifications would in all likelihood have included one or other of the past constituents of Life Orientation, viz. Guidance or Religious education or Physical education (*cf.* Van Deventer & Van Niekerk 2008: 5). It is noteworthy that each participant had knowledge of some aspects of Life

Orientation, a particular skill to offer and/or personality traits that drew them to teaching Life Orientation, but no real expertise in any of the aspects.

In the light of the aims of this research (1.4), these participants confirmed that they had not been adequately exposed to the content of the focus area Citizenship education or Religion education, although at least two of them had completed some courses in "World Religions". In spite of their perceptions that they lacked training in this learning area/subject, all three participants expressed their enthusiasm and interest in the teaching of Life Orientation in general (*cf.* 5.4.6, Table 5.10a).

FG question:	What status is Life Orientation given in your schools?
FG2#2	Commentary: status of Life Orientation in the three different schools

School A

All Life Orientation teachers at School A have an additional subject to teach. Rochelle indicated that there seemed to be divided interest in Life Orientation amongst the staff, in that some of her colleagues recognised its importance while others thought of it as being of less importance. The School Management Team (SMT) was behind Life Orientation, since "the community is low on values, morals and self-esteem. Management sees building of values via Life Orientation". Life Orientation also provides opportunities to work with problem learners.

Of a staff complement of 38, four teachers had been responsible for teaching Life Orientation in 2008.

School B

At School B "the attitude from the office of the Principal is very good". Life Orientation though had always been a "one-man department", viz. taught by "the HoD and no one else". Phumzile pointed out that his HoD only wanted "special people to teach". "He doesn't want it (Life Orientation) to be a stop gap". This had been the situation until two years previously when other staff had been "roped in". Not all members of staff were comfortable with the subject.

Of a staff of 44, nine teachers were responsible for teaching Life Orientation.

School C

At School C (according to Tlaletso) the Principal and School Management Team (SMT) recognised the importance of Life Orientation. Tlaletso explained that other teachers had been given Life Orientation, but they had not really wanted to teach it. Tlaletso had been teaching Life Orientation

to the whole school (*cf.* FG2#3). Her colleagues referred to Life Orientation as *"jou vak"* (your subject), seemingly to distance themselves from the subject.

Of a staff of 34, six teachers had been assigned to teaching Life Orientation.

Interpretive commentary

Based on these responses to the question it seems that in all three of these schools there had been divided opinion amongst staff members as to the relevance of Life Orientation in the school curriculum. That Life Orientation was assigned to small teams of staff at schools is an interesting finding on the surface, indicating that teachers *could* focus and together develop a "practice" of Life Orientation. However, closer examination of Tlaletso's narrative indicates that members of her small team have not taken ownership of Life Orientation and do not appear to share her enthusiasm for it (note: "*jou vak"*). Phumzile highlighted the role of the Head of Department (HoD) of Life Orientation in promoting the value of the subject. This kind of attitude is important for the status of Life Orientation in schools, particularly in the light of Van Deventer and Van Niekerk's study (2008: 135) (*cf.* 1.3; 2.2.3), in which they discovered that the feelings of incompetence amongst teachers of Life Orientation are related to being unqualified or to being shifted temporarily into teaching Life Orientation. The HoD's comments were significant in that the fragmented content knowledge and weak contributions to pedagogy provided in DoE-initiated INSET by facilitators who are themselves inadequately prepared to facilitate effectively, do not help to counter negativity in schools (*cf.* 1.3).

FG question:	What is your school's approach to how Life Orientation is taught?
FG2#3	Commentary: schools' approaches to Life Orientation

School A

Every teacher who teaches Life Orientation "does three parts of it". Focus areas 1, 2 and 4 are taught separately from Physical education (Focus area 3), because Physical Education is given to other educators to deal with on its own. Rochelle's commentary: "the sad part is these teachers are not Phys. Ed. qualified teachers. So um…the Phys Ed. doesn't really get what it deserves…".

School B

According to Phumzile, every Life Orientation teacher teaches all four of the focus areas at his school.

School C

Tlaletso had been the only teacher in Life Orientation at School C until 2007. The situation changed in 2007 and 2008 when Grades 11 and 12 were introduced to the new FET curriculum, when more teachers were added to the Life Orientation team. Tlaletso indicated that it would have been too much for her to take all of the classes on her own. “A different teacher is responsible for different modules in the textbook”. All teachers use the same textbook and teach a certain module (meaning each of the four focus areas in the Life Orientation curriculum). “For example, one teacher does sports (Physical Education), one does Citizenship education and so on”. Teachers prefer teaching in their particular area of interest, “or what ever they feel comfortable doing”. Tlaletso indicated that she had not minded which “section” she taught, because she “loves it”.

Interpretive commentary

These accounts confirm that not all teachers are adept at teaching all focus areas of Life Orientation, a situation which could lead to the neglect or even exclusion of any of the focus areas. Tlaletso’s narrative indicates, furthermore, that teachers in her school are heavily reliant on textbooks for content. Teachers tend to interpret the focus areas according to how they are written about in textbooks, rather than according to the guidelines offered by the curriculum documents or even as a result of the teacher’s own creativity (*cf.* PAR Stage 3).

Two general problems could be identified at this stage in the PAR phase:

- Not all teachers of Life Orientation are trained in all four of the focus areas, a situation that has serious implications for Citizenship education as a whole (*cf*. Ramphele 2010);
- A lack of enthusiasm exists amongst some teachers who are assigned to teach any aspect of Life Orientation, areas in which they do not have the content knowledge.

These responses are validated by the findings of SQ 9. Of the 37 respondents, 78% indicated that they had attended Life Orientation INSET programmes. The remainder, 22% (N = 8:37), had not attended any INSET. Of the 78% (N = 29:37) who had attended some form of INSET, only half of the sample (51%) (N = 19:37) indicated that they felt adequately prepared to teach Life Orientation as a result of their having attended INSET. Hence a picture begins to emerge of why the participants may have experienced some resistance from colleagues to teaching Life Orientation at their schools. Resistance could be based on a lack of confidence resulting from inadequate training. This situation resonates with Van Deventer and Van Niekerk’s (2008: 134) findings that INSET programmes have not necessarily contributed towards improving the professional status of teachers, their self confidence or their knowledge base (*cf.* 2.2.3).

FG question:	How do you feel about teaching Life Orientation?
FG2#4	Commentary: Teacher opinions on teaching Life Orientation

This question was intended to shift the focus from Life Orientation in the broader school context to the opinions and experiences of the participants themselves.

The respondents expressed their particular viewpoints on teaching and learning Life Orientation and the nature of the learning area/subject itself**.**

Interpretive commentary

Two sub-themes were identified in the responses to this question (*cf.* 6.2):

(i) The problems the participants have encountered with Life Orientation as a subject/learning area; and,
(ii) The value or importance that the participants have attached to Life Orientation.

A detailed analysis of these sub-themes follows below.

(i) FG2#4a: **The problems teachers have with Life Orientation**

a. Dissatisfaction with the assessment of Life Orientation

The participants feel that the assessment of Life Orientation is inappropriate for the type of subject that it is. All three agreed that the DoE expectations are too rigid. Life Orientation encourages learners to express opinions on sensitive issues which the teachers do not feel comfortable assessing in a formal way. For this reason the teachers do not think that Life Orientation should be a "written subject", but that it should provide opportunities for learners to share and open up on real-life issues as these pertain to their contexts and their lifestyles. The general perception amongst the teachers is that the DoE-determined methods of assessment restrict their approaches to Life Orientation.

b. Time allocation

Not enough time is allocated to Life Orientation on the school timetable (72 hours per week). The problem however does not only concern the 72 hours, but that each of the four focus areas in the curriculum is assigned a specified amount of time on the school timetable. This observation by the teachers is in keeping with the time allocated to the various Life Orientation focus areas specified in policy documents (DoE 2007: 8; *cf.* DOE 2010: 7)[33].

[33] Amendments to the NCS were released on 3rd September 2010. The time allocated to Life Orientation in the Learning Programme Guidelines (2007) did not change in the amended documents (2010).

c. Textbooks

Teachers have a problem with the contents of textbooks. They maintained that the available textbooks were not particularly useful or informative (*cf.* SQ 13, 6.2 (v)).

(ii) FG2#4b: **The value or importance attached to Life Orientation as a school subject**

a. Life Orientation is learner-centred, focuses on "who the child is"

The value of Life Orientation for its contribution to the personal development and well-being of their learners was clearly expressed by all three of the participants. The teachers expressed the idea that Life Orientation is intrinsically learner-centred and that its value lies therein.

b. Life Orientation addresses social problems

Life Orientation provides "knowledge about life", which Rochelle suggested young adults in her community are short on. Life Orientation also provides a space where social and personal issues can be discussed with learners. In Phumzile's school community, HIV/AIDS has left many children without parents meaning that "child-headed households", households in which older siblings head up the family unit and care for the younger ones, are commonplace. Phumzile's response to this question provides an example of how Life Orientation addresses social problems: "Especially if we look at the background of our learners. Some of them come from child-headed families, some of them coming from families where the parents do not have time to sit down and discuss these things with them" (Appendix VI, FG2#4 Commentary 6).

c. Life Orientation addresses life issues

The expression, "forbidden topics", was used by Rochelle in the discussion (Appendix VI, Narrative 10). She meant that certain important and relevant topics which are taboo in the home are addressed in the Life Orientation class. The examples mentioned specifically included puberty and sex, HIV/AIDS and diverse religions. Her comment suggests that a conflict situation might exist: the conservative home vs. the more open school environment. Rochelle pointed out that learners remain ignorant about important life issues because parents will not allow such issues to be discussed at home. Yet teachers of Life Orientation raise these and attempt to draw learners into engaging with them to meet the requirements of the national curriculum. This comment provides an example of Kerr's (2002: 9) distinction between "values-explicit" approaches and "values-neutral approaches" to citizenship education and the dilemmas for individuals and communities that these engender (*cf.* 1.9.2).

Interpretive commentary

It is interesting to note that these teachers expressed an acute awareness of their learners' backgrounds (e.g. that there are child-headed households), the relevance of Life Orientation in addressing life issues (e.g. puberty) and the particular religious and/or cultural worldviews in their social contexts (e.g. religious diversity). These responses seem to draw attention to the need for "values-explicit" approaches to Citizenship education if one considers the social problems and issues that the teacher encounters in the classroom. These examples also draw attention to the teacher's pastoral role in relation to enabling learners to develop the life skills to cope with diversity and its many permutations (*cf.* Moletsane, Hemson & Muthukrishna 2004: 68).

To elaborate on the problem of time allocated to Life Orientation, the official documents allocate two hours per week to Life Orientation as a whole (DoE 2007: 8). The time allocated to Citizenship education is less than half of the time allocated to Life Orientation in a week. Half the time, viz. one hour is to be allocated to Physical education. The time allocated to Religion education is less than 8% of the time allocated to Life Orientation as a whole, since it forms a small part of Citizenship education. Referring to the survey questionnaire again, it is interesting to note that in spite of the limitations on time, 81% of the respondents had indicated their willingness to devote some time to religious and cultural diversity, whether through the consideration of facts about various religions or through ethical and moral issues (Table 5.10a, SQ 13#Theme 2,). These three participants were amongst those who saw value in assigning more time to Religion education than is recommended in the Department of Education policy documents (DoE 2007: 8, *Learning Programme Guidelines*; DoE 2010: 7) .

FG Question	Do you think that your initial training has equipped you to teach LO comfortably?
Code FG2#5	Commentary: Professional training of participants

The responses to this question highlight two key themes:

- The teachers' shortcomings in terms of the knowledge base for Life Orientation;
- The prevalence of personal agency, to accommodate for lack of training.

In their responses to this question, all three of the participants commented that Life Orientation is heavily embedded in Psychology. However, only Phumzile stated that this is one of his shortcomings in terms of the knowledge base required to teach effectively.

Rochelle and Tlaletso pointed out that their being effective facilitators of Life Orientation had nothing to do with their initial training or even attendance at INSET (*cf.* SQ 9). Their life

experiences working with youth in their church communities had enabled them to cope (*cf.* Portraits 1 and 3; 6.4.1.4).

Interpretive commentary

In the light of the views they expressed concerning their professional training, it could be argued that given the age-group categories of these participants (AGC 40-49 years and 50+; *cf.* 4.3.3.2; 5.3.1), it is unlikely that their undergraduate qualifications would have prepared them to teach all of the aspects of Life Orientation. The teachers who fall into these age-group categories, and probably those on the upper end of category 31-39 (SQ 1), were trained in the constituent subjects or focus areas of Life Orientation, viz. Guidance, Religious education or Physical education. The radical curriculum reforms and resultant restructuring of the national curriculum since South Africa's democratisation, starting in the early 1990s, resulted in those subjects that were bearers of apartheid ideology being removed or completely reconceptualised in the reform process (2.2.2, 2.2.3) (Jansen 1999a; Chisholm 2005). However, it may be that the socialising influences of those subjects continue to contribute to the epistemological framework of teachers, where personal beliefs and views on religious, cultural and ethnic diversity are concerned (*cf.* 3.2.3.1). The response to SQ 14 by a Principal of a public school quoted previously in Table 5.11b (SQ14#Theme 7) is a case in point: "Being in a Christian school, the majority [are] Christian learners and parents, there is no reason for influencing them. [It is] against the culture of the majority of parents*"* [Respondent 34].

Life Orientation as a learning area/subject reflects the democratisation of South Africa (DoE 2003a: 11; DoE 2010: 3) and requires teachers who are able to fulfil the goals of a transforming and democratic society in which all categories of diversity are tolerated and respected (1.9.3 (iv); 2.2.2). The points made above, therefore, strengthen the case for more effective INSET programmes which engage teachers in learning "new" and appropriate content for democratic Citizenship education. In such a context, however, learning, as Biggs (2003: 13) suggests, should entail more than just the acquisition of information. In the post-apartheid era, learning includes conceptual change and also "epistemic shifts" pertaining to how teachers construe knowledge (Perkins 1992: 85, 92) (*cf.* 2.2) and values, particularly in relation to diversity (Banks 1997: 119; Nieto 2000: 315; Moletsane *et al* 2004) (*cf.* 7.3.1).

FG Question	Do you think that INSET has equipped you to teach Life Orientation comfortably?
FG2#6	Commentary: Shortcomings of Life Orientation INSET programmes.

Both Rochelle and Tlaletso believed that their ability to cope with Life Orientation came from their experiences in youth work outside of the school context (*cf.* 6.4.1.4, Portraits 1 and 3). These two participants commented that two-hour INSET sessions had not been sufficient to provide the kind of knowledge required to cope with youth issues. They stressed, furthermore, that the topics were presented in a fragmented way, or that isolated issues, such as gender equity and abuse were presented. They described how inadequate these workshops had been, especially when they seemed to suggest that one could "inform a child's life after a 1½ hour workshop" (Rochelle). Moreover, the INSET facilitators themselves lacked content knowledge and skills and were too dependent on a ready-made manual. Hence, Rochelle's commentary: "... they (INSET facilitators) give information basically, and many a time they read the manual over. They give you the manual, they read the manual over …" (Appendix VI, FG2#6, Commentary 9).

Rochelle expressed the need for INSET to "take the development to a higher level", because the teacher is the one who will inform the learner ultimately.

Tlaletso's commentary:

> "It's true... within 1 week's time, I attended (in) 2005 at [name of the place with-held] and in 2006 at [withheld]. It was just a week's thing and as she [meaning Rochelle] said they go through the manual, and at the end we didn't finish the manual because now we have to follow otherwise they would skip some other modules to say, 'No this one is not important let's go to this one' and at the end you are not so much equipped to go back to class.
>
> It's not a matter of getting some other basic things to help children it's the way you address them … the way you talk to them, that means a lot to them" (Appendix VI, FG2#6, Commentary 10).

Responding to an INSET workshop that she had attended about a week prior to this PAR meeting (Stage 2), Rochelle pointed out that in terms of the presentation of Life Orientation content, nothing had changed since Tlaletso had attended in 2005 and 2006. Once again, the presenter had not engaged the teachers in any form of discussion. The purpose of the meeting was to pass on information.

Interpretive commentary

The commentaries from the participants verify the critiques in teacher development literature concerning the inefficacy of large-scale transmission-type training sessions in which information is "scripted" in the form of a manual unrelated to the particular contexts of both teachers and learners (2.2.4) (Fullan 2002; Hoban 2002; Cochran-Smith 2004: 15; Ranko-Ramaili 2003: 102).

The participants' commentaries (FG2#6) also raise numerous valid and relevant points regarding the role of the teacher of Life Orientation. On the one hand, teachers are conscious of the need for

the professional expertise that would enable them to deal with particularly sensitive issues in the classroom and the broader school environment (counselling in HIV/AIDS cases and teenage suicide were specifically mentioned). However, over and above expert knowledge, the teachers emphasised at various points during the discussions that the attitude, personal values and emotional and spiritual resourcefulness of the Life Orientation teacher are equally important, if not more so, in defining pedagogical adeptness.

An observation in relation to the commentaries includes the participants' frequent reference to their own values. Phrases such as "its about who the child is", "accepting his/her opinion", "break down the barriers", "it's the way you talk, the way you address them", "building a bridge of trust", "we must accept one another", "learners from child-headed households" are indications that these particular teachers operate in the classroom from a values-based life stance, a perspective vital to the success of learning and teaching for democratic Citizenship education (Nieto 2000: 338; Banks 1997: 107; Gay 2002: 107) (*cf.* SQ 10, 5.4.3.2).

FG Question	Which (Life Orientation) focus areas are you most interested in?
Code FG2#7	Commentary: Area of interest in the Life Orientation subject/learning area

The participants responded as follows:

(i) Tlaletso copes with all four focus areas. Her explanations indicated that she seemed to have a good sense of the integration of the four focus areas.

(ii) Rochelle chose Personal well-being and Careers. Her response was framed in values. Careers are important to direct learners on to a course in life and enable them to "know what (they) want out of life, taking care of yourself".

(iii) Phumzile said Careers, because "It's more practical". But learners at his school enjoy Physical Education more than the other outcomes.

Interpretive commentary

It is interesting to note that in spite of there being a well-formulated Citizenship education focus area and a *National Policy on Religion and Education* (DoE 2003b), Citizenship education was not explicitly mentioned as an area of interest by any of the participants. A comparison with responses from the survey questionnaire indicated that little input on Citizenship education and/or Religion education occurred in any of the INSET sessions, a lack which may explain why these teachers did not refer to it specifically (*cf.* SQ 9.4, Table 5.6d).

Of the 37 respondents to SQ 9.4 (Table 5.6a), 29 (78%) had attended INSET. Of the 78%, 35% (N = 13:37) indicated that a section had been included on diverse religions and cultures (Table 5.6d).

Yet the responses to SQ 10 presented an overwhelmingly positive response (95%) to how teachers felt about including topics and themes about diversity in Life Orientation (*cf.* 5.4.3). Against the background of the responses from the survey questionnaire, the questions in the focus group interview pertaining to including diverse religions and cultures in Life Orientation were integral to gaining a deeper understanding of the position of these participants towards religion and diversity.

FG Question	How do you feel about teaching content about diverse religions and cultures?
Code FG2#8	Narrative: Views on including content on diverse religions and cultures

Three narratives were identified in the analysis of this question. Each narrative highlights different issues of interest and concern to the teachers which demanded further exploration in the community of practice. The complete exchange between the three participants is included in Appendix VI (Narratives 11, 12 and13). A summary follows of the key themes as these were identified in the narratives, participant by participant, with citations from the narratives.

Interpretive commentary

The reasons as to why content on diverse religions and cultures should be included in Life Orientation:

(i) Tlaletso's reasons arose from her personal beliefs about democracy and diversity

The language used by Tlaletso mirrored the social discourse that emerged after the democratisation of South Africa, which is typical of INSET programmes. This point was deduced from her reference to the sanction of religious diversity in *the Constitution* (15 (i)) and her use of words or expressions such as, "must understand diversity", "acceptance of one another"; "acceptance of diversity"; "not to stereotype" (*cf.* SQ10, 5.4.3.2; Taylor 2001: 8; Punch 2009: 196):

> "I like it very much because learners must understand diversity of our country. And they have to know that because it's been set in our Constitution, it's accepted into our Constitution. They have to not be stereotyped they have to accept other religions, they have to understand that it's their right to have those religions that they want…." (Appendix VI, FG2#8, Narrative 11).

Tlaletso's response suggests moreover an outcome of learning associated with the teacher's role as the mediator of learning about diversity in the classroom: learners should learn to accept all "other religions". Her response emphasises that the kind of knowledge required by learners is non-negotiable: "learners must understand", "they have to know", "they have to accept", all because "it's been set in the Constitution". She had explained that the learners in her classes were inclined

to claim the superiority of their own religions. For this reason, she described her role in showing the learners that “everyone’s religion is best for them”. Tlaletso used “accept” six times in her narrative. It is possible that “acceptance” and “tolerance” are important to Tlaletso, because of her own personal experiences of discrimination in South Africa (as a black woman). This response from Tlaletso aligns with the discourse evident in the larger data pool, SQ 10 specifically, in which affirmations of diversity were evident. This response, however, indicated that Tlaletso was inclined towards insisting on openness and mutual acceptance in her classroom (1.9.3 (ii) (iii)). The response emphasises that teacher development for Life Orientation should explicitly focus and direct teachers to understand “values-explicit” conceptualisations of Citizenship education (*cf.* 1.9.2 (i)) to enable them to place such incidents as they arise in the classroom into perspective. An understanding therefore of McLaughlin’s (1992) differentiation between “minimal” and “maximal” interpretations of citizenship education would in all likelihood guide the teacher’s noble intentions towards more effective pedagogy for diversity (*cf.* Buchardt 2007: 17ff; Ter Avest & Bakker 2009: 21; Du Preez 2008).

Tlaletso also referred to posters that she had used on the topic of different religions, which she had obtained from the INSET facilitators, to promote understanding of certain observable features of religions (clothing) (*cf. Discussion of the findings* SQ 9.4, SQ 13). The response is interesting since it highlights a problem associated with how teachers had been “taught”’ to represent religions in INSET programmes, in limited and reified terms (*cf.* 3.4.3). This response aligns with her response to the survey questionnaire and those of the other respondents.

Whilst reification is required to establish the domain of interest in a Citizenship education community of practice and to promote participation (*cf.* 3.4.3) (Wenger 1998: 58, 104), negative reifications, even if benign, are problematic in that they contribute to essentialist views of religions (Jackson 1997: 52; *cf.* Baumann 1996: 14, 15). Tlaletso’s reified understanding of concepts is passed on in her approach to teaching religions in the classroom, alongside her view that all religions must be accepted (*cf.* PAR Stage 5, Classroom observations). This tendency towards essentialising concepts of religions is an example of the type of occurrence in practice that could be examined in a community of practice (*cf*. 3.4.4.1).

(ii) Rochelle’s reasons arose from a classroom experience

Rochelle described a lesson that she had designed for a Grade 10 class at her school (School A). The learners were given a group task during which they had been required to use information on a particular religion to “defend the religion”, and describe the value system of that religion. It seems that learners were required to think themselves “into” the religion that they were assigned in order to understand aspects of it. The learners were initially resistant to the task on the grounds that they were not supposed to study other religions, because “they are Christians” [according to Rochelle].

Rochelle persisted in explaining the task and the learners eventually co-operated to complete it. Of interest to the community of practice was the way in which Rochelle directed learners to think beyond their predominantly Christian context and to discover what they could learn "from" the religions that they were required to investigate.

The learners' responses to Rochelle's task seemed to indicate the learners' lack of awareness of the religious diversity in the broader community (viz. around the town). The comments from the learners accord with the Christian dominance in the area, which is specifically evident in the number of evangelical Churches that I observed while driving to School A. It seemed as if this community (where School A is situated) had "insulated" itself against the diversity evident in the broader community. This assumption is based on the fact that there is a predominantly Indian area on the north-west side of the town (a legacy of the Group Areas Act), which boasts a prominent Islamic institute of learning that none of the three participants ever referred to. This comment applies not only to Rochelle and her learners, but may also be the situation for Phumzile and the learners at School B. It seemed that Rochelle's community had identified itself strongly with Christianity and did not see the necessity to interest itself in the diversity of religion or belief, which teachers and learners were required to do, since the curriculum reforms after 1994. This situation provides an example of how participation in a community of practice could alert teachers to diversity in the broader community and therefore of the relevance of "situated knowledge" as a valuable resource for developing a domain of interest (*cf.* Young 2000: 70; Moore 2006: 6).

(iii) Phumzile's reasons arose from being aware of his particular social context and the culture of his school.

There were at least four areas for follow-up in Phumzile's narration of the problems that he had encountered with regard to content on religious diversity in the classroom.

- The first was related specifically to his context. Although Christianity dominates in his neighbourhood, the learners were aware of a connection between religion and culture (*cf.* Buchardt 2007: 17, 2010: 259);
- The second to Phumzile's observations of differences within religions, Christianity and Islam in particular;
- The third to the perception that such differences are difficult to deal with in the classroom; and,
- The fourth to the lack of information in the available textbooks on the relationship between religion and culture and diversity "in" religions (*cf.* Olsson 2010).

In the light of the main research question, the focus group discussion from which the points above have been extracted indicates the value of teachers learning together in a community of practice.

Each of the participants shared examples of content, learning and teaching strategies, how the context of their school communities influenced their choices of content for lessons, or their frustrations with regard to sourcing content valid to their contexts. The examples which the participants provided reflect the dilemmas of "situated practice" (*cf.* Haakedal 2007: 37) as the teachers in each of the different schools raised the particular areas of interest or issues of concern particular to their own school "culture". The particular issues that they raised cannot be examined or resolved in a vertical transmission of reified information as had been the case in the DoE INSET sessions (*cf.* 2.2.4; 5.4.2, Tables 5.6b, 5.6d) (Ranko-Ramaili 2003: 102; Southwood 2000; Cochran-Smith 2004: 15; Wenger 1998: 215). The exchange that took place in the focus group is an indication of the mutual engagement or horizontal interaction that should characterise ongoing teacher development (*cf.* 2.2, i – iv; 3.4.4.3), in which the particular issues or dilemmas raised can be interrogated by teachers together. However, it must be noted that mutual engagement was prompted by the interview questions and comments from the interviewer. This indicates that vertical input may be necessary to inject new learning and new ideas into the community of practice, or even to coax teachers to think differently about topical issues or their "situated" experiences (*cf.* 3.5.1). It seemed at this stage of the research that learning in the community of practice would need to occur both vertically and horizontally, provided that the vertical did not become the transmission of a reified body of subject matter with no engagement from the teacher-participants (*cf.* 3.4.1; Wenger 1998: 57, 2006b: 17).

The exchange that took place in this focus group indicated that teacher development ought also to foster the various elements of transformative learning to enable teachers to think differently or to develop new habits of mind pertaining to generating a sense of "practice" for Citizenship education /Religion education (*cf.* 3.2.3.3, 3.2.3.4 (ii, iii). At this point "reflection-on-practice" (*cf.* Schön 1983: 61; Brookfield 1995: 30) and dialogue as reflective discourse (Taylor 2009: 9; Mezirow 2000: 10) were prominent in the focus group discussion (*cf.* 3.2.3.4 (ii, iii).

The extract to follow provides a further example from FGI 2 of mutual engagement with reflection and dialogue as these occurred in this community of practice (*cf*. 3.4.4.3) (FGI 2, Commentary 13).

Extract FGI 2, Narrative 13 (Full transcript Appendix VI)

Phumzile: In my case it's not that interesting, it's actually very difficult. I find the topic very difficult, especially because most of our learners, let me say 100% of our learners, are Christian. So we tend to know very little about the other religions [viz. in School B and the environs]. Again they [the learners] are fully aware of the relationship between religion and culture and so what makes it difficult for us is that you see our literature will give us more on the religion and we need to bring in the relationship with the culture and then what also makes this topic very difficult is that these religions …it's like the Christians …it does not mean that all the Christians agree. The same with the Muslims. You find that they also differ in their practice of Islam as a result with our little knowledge we are never satisfied really with the little information that we see.

RF: Like in the textbooks?

Phumzile: Yes. You will find that what is in the Grade 11 textbook is similar to exactly what we discussed in Grade 8 and in Grade 9

RF: So it's sort of repetitive every year?

Phumzile and Tlaletso together: Yes.

RF: But it's the same thing.

Tlaletso: Mm, it's the same thing. It's just that with our textbook, Grade 8 you might find something and when you get to Gr. 11 it's more complex.

Rochelle: You know what I like (to do). [ ] One of the things that also differs is clothing from group to group so I asked them (the learners) what is the significance of it. They [the textbook authors] don't give it they just say this religion dresses like that, so I actually asked them [the learners]: What is the significance in the clothing? Why do you think they wear their clothes like that?

[ ] The one group spoke of the saris, these ladies are very elegant but they are well dressed and by the way they are dressed they are actually stating what they represent so instead of just saying what they are wearing I said what do you think is the significance?

RF: So you might be broaching the same subject, but you're taking it into another level, a deeper level.

Rochelle: But like I say, my being involved in these things (research project) you're giving me the opportunity to look behind the normal content.

The comments by Phumzile and Tlaletso on the repetition of aspects of religions in the textbooks and their reliance on textbooks as sources of information were countered by Rochelle's comments. Rochelle showed that she was quite well informed and resourceful. Her responses to her colleagues' complaints concerning limited information and repetition in textbooks revealed a different and insightful angle on facilitating learning about diversity in religions in the classroom. She indicated that good questioning techniques draw on the learners' opinions and encourage thinking about why people do as they do: "what is the significance of the clothing"? Her response intimated that the skill of probing for answers is not dependent on textbooks. However, her responses also revealed a reified understanding of observable features in religions, although her classroom strategies were insightful. This incident also drew attention to the need for teachers to learn the skill of reflecting on the meaning of "knowing-in-practice" as Schön (1983: 61) puts it, or content reflection in Mezirow's typology of reflective actions (3.2.3.4 (ii); Mezirow 1991: 101; Cranton & King 2003: 34).

The engagement in the focus group discussion provided the following relevant topics or issues for further exploration as material for the domain of interest and shared repertoire:

- Phumzile pointed out that in the township in which School B is situated, the relationship between religion and culture is relevant and of interest. Although Christianity dominates in his neighbourhood, the relationship between African culture and Christianity is a

phenomenon that cannot be ignored. Phumzile's situation is relevant for many other teachers and their learners all over South Africa.

- The textbooks tend not to provide adequately for this relationship between religion and culture. Textbooks tend to be limited in what they provide on all religions and repetitive from one grade to the next, although the topics in higher grades may be presented in more complex terms than in previous grades.
- Content knowledge amongst teachers may be limited to everyday commonsense knowledge. This observation is aligned to the survey question that required respondents to explain what the INSET programmes had included on diverse religions and cultures (SQ 9.4. 5.4.2). The 35% (N = 13:37) of respondents who indicated in the survey questionnaire that topics on diverse religions had been included in the INSET programmes, stated that such issues as these had been dealt with only briefly (*cf.* Table 5.6d, *Discussion of the findings* SQ 9.4).
- Through reflective engagement on levels of knowledge and assumptions about the need for ready-made materials (textbooks), teachers could be motivated to prepare their own materials to suit their community contexts.

FG Question	What do you think you would like to get out of these sessions that you spend with me?
Code FG2#9	Commentary and Narrative: Views on participation in the project.

This question was aimed at drawing attention to the idea that teachers could learn more effectively through participation, communicatively with one another.

Interpretive commentary

The full focus group discussion is included in Appendix VI (FG2#9)**.** The key points selected from the responses are the following:

(i) Tlaletso would like to be able to present diversity in such a way to her learners so that they understand more than what she has "given them for now".

(ii) Rochelle would like to know "how to handle diversity without anyone being intimidated".

(iii) Phumzile would like to obtain information on other religions so that as a "facilitator in the classroom" it adds to his self-confidence. Information on indigenous religions is needed.

I have already said that all of the members of the group seemed to be in favour of dealing with diversity in the classroom, and it seemed that they had joined the project to learn to manage diversity better. Analysis of the discussion that ensued established the following viewpoints from the participants:

- The DoE was criticised for the shortcomings of INSET programmes, particularly with regard to providing ongoing and effective teacher development for diversity.
- Since Life Orientation is a "new" subject, DoE facilitators should play a greater role in enhancing teachers' understanding of the diverse beliefs of their learners, as well as generating respect for all religions. This point was made to emphasise the idea of generating mutuality between teachers and learners. Teachers need to learn to respond favourably to the diversity amongst the learners, while learners need to learn to respond favourably to the religious identity of their teachers (reciprocity in the classroom) (*cf.* 1.9.3 (ii) (iii)).
- Teachers should learn not to allow their own religions to dominate in the classroom. The teacher's role is to present diverse religions in ways that promote tolerance and acceptance of others, inside the classroom as well as outside (*cf.* Fancourt 2007: 53ff).

In the contributions from the participants, it was interesting to note that while the teachers were concerned with having the ability to present content knowledge without imposing their beliefs on the learners, they also tended to show levels of intolerance towards some minority religions which they had come across in their schools but did not know much about (*cf.* Appendix VI, Rochelle FGI 2, Narrative 17) (*cf.* FG2#10, iii).

FG Question	Do you think parents need to be informed about the place of religion in education?
Code FG2#10	Commentary and narrative: Parental role and the place of religion in the school curriculum.

The general feeling amongst the participants was that parents do need to be informed. The reasons provided were the following:

(i) Parents (and other care givers) may not sanction homework assignments if they are not aware of the place of religion in education in a democracy

Tlaletso told a story about a boy at her school who wanted to do research on Satanism for an assignment that she had set. The Deputy Principal got to hear about his choice. Since the boy "had a lot of problems at school", the Deputy Principal interpreted the boy's motives as being ulterior and reported him to the boys' home where he is a resident. This perspective was in all probability exacerbated by the perceptions that people in general have towards Satanism. The Principal of the boys' home refused to allow him to research Satanism, so Tlaletso had to give him the option of researching another religion.

(ii) Parents do not always accept that learners are taught about other religions at school (*cf.* FG2#4b)

The participants agreed that parents need to be informed, since they do not always understand the reasons or values for including diverse religions in school subjects. Rochelle pointed out that parents' ignorance results in children responding in the same manner, therefore "if parents know, then children will know". There may be conflict between what parents teach their children at home, and what their children learn at school. Tlaletso contributed to this discussion by drawing our attention to a debate which she had heard on a local talk-radio station in which parents had been objecting to their children learning about diverse religions at school. One father who phoned in to the talk-show had used the Constitution to protect his right to the freedom of religion or belief by reporting his daughter's school to the human rights commission for misrepresenting his religion in the learning materials put together by teachers at the school. This example provided an interesting topic for debate and critical reflection on the meaning of freedom of religion or belief, a further example of intolerance towards minority religious groups, and an opportunity to interrogate freedom of religion or belief as a Citizenship education topic in the FET curriculum. Furthermore, the value of raising and discussing these issues in a discursive community provided teachers with an example of what it means to articulate diversity issues in a public space (*cf.* Young 2000: 23, 26; Bohman 1996: 5, 37).

(iii) How teachers present or represent religions is also an issue to which parents may object.

Rochelle related how she had objected to the way in which a religion had been taught to her own child in a Life Orientation lesson. Rochelle said that the religion, the name of which she could not remember, had been taught to invoke belief. She had lodged a complaint with the Principal of the school to protect her daughter from any further exposure to this religion. Rochelle's response relates to the discussion in (ii) above and also draws attention to how intolerance may be associated with "not knowing" or not having complete information about a topic (*cf.* 3.2.3.5). Participation in a discursive community allows teachers to relate troubling experiences, but should also allow for critical reflection on how their own frames of reference may influence their presuppositions towards religions and beliefs other than their own (Mezirow 1991, 2000) (3.2.1; 3.2.2). In retrospect, this narrative could have been probed more deeply to determine why Rochelle had responded in the way that she did, particularly since her own daughter had been involved in the situation.

6.4.2.5 A summary of key themes as these emerged from Focus Group Interview 2

This focus group interview/discussion provided much of the material for follow-up in the subsequent PAR stages. The following key themes would be consistently revisited and developed in future meetings:

(i) Sources of content knowledge.

(ii) The shortcomings of INSET, with particular reference to how information is transmitted by DoE facilitators. Training manuals are merely “read over” with no opportunity for follow-up during or after the sessions.

(iii) The limitations of resources in providing relevant content on religions and cultures pertaining to the different regions in South Africa.

(iv) The role of the community of practice as the support base alongside INSET for continuous teacher development (*cf.* 2.2, i-iv).

(v) Working towards establishing a “practice” for Citizenship education/Religion education which includes:

- Sharing in a community of professionals to assist one another to develop a coherent knowledge base with conceptual understanding of religions, beliefs and cultures in South Africa broadly and of their learners more specifically (*cf*. 3.4.4.1) (Miller 2009: 130ff; Everington 2009: 100ff; *cf.* Banks *et al* 2005);
- Enhancing teachers’ knowledge and understanding of democratic inclusion as a value, to counter the suspicion and exclusion that minority religious or cultural groups often seem to have to endure (*cf.* Young 2000: 17, 18);
- Knowing how to facilitate and mediate learning about diverse religions and beliefs using principles of deliberative and communicative democracy (Young 2000: 52; Bohman 1996: 6, 7);
- Assisting teachers to shift from any compulsion to impose their particular beliefs and values to working with the diversity amongst their learners (Nieto 2000: 45; Fancourt 2007: 53ff);
- Pursuing the meanings of tolerance, reciprocity and mutual respect as Citizenship education values (Gutmann 1996: 158, 159; *cf.* Waghid 2004, 2009);
- Developing resourcefulness beyond the textbook; therewith knowing the limitations of textbooks and knowing where to locate information not available in textbooks;
- Developing dialogical and reflective skills with other professionals in order to work through the tensions associated with diversity and conflicting beliefs (*cf.* Miller 2009; Westheimer 2008; Van Doorn-Harder 2007; Afdal 2007; Cochran-Smith 2004);
- Developing appropriate assessment methods that do not detract from teachers’ and learners’ being able to discuss and debate diversity and life issues with their learners (*cf.* Fancourt 2009: 84ff, 2010).

6.4.3 Stage 3: reflection and planning

Date of meeting: 5th May & 21st May, 2008

6.4.3.1 Rationale and procedure

The purpose of this meeting was to focus on at least three key areas in relation to teacher development:

(i) To provide feedback on the findings of the first two focus group discussions with the participants in the light of the global perspective (viz. findings of the survey questionnaire) as well as the particular contexts of the participants. The purpose was also to take the research forward, using the preliminary findings to guide the ongoing engagement in the community of practice.

(ii) To draw attention to the various policy documents pertaining to Religion education and Citizenship education.

(iii) To determine the kinds of resources useful for enhancing learning and teaching Religion education.

6.4.3.2 Plan of action: Focus group interview/discussion 3 (FGI 3)

The programme planned for this meeting is set out in Box 6.1. This agenda was drawn up based on what teachers had said were the shortcomings of the INSET sessions that they had attended from 2004 to the period of time in which the project was introduced to them, viz. 2008.

AGENDA FOR PAR GROUP MEETING: 5TH MAY AND 21ST MAY 2008

(i) Feedback from survey and focus group interviews conducted on the 6th and 19th March 2008.

(ii) Input on policy documents and the right to freedom of religion or belief:

- National Curriculum Statement, Life Orientation, Grades 10-12 (DoE 2003a); Examine and discuss assessment standards and *Content and contexts for the attainment of assessment standards* in the NCS (2003a: 22-25; 28-30; 33-34).
- National Policy on Religion and Education (DoE 2003b).
- The Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (DoE 2001).
- The Bill of Rights in the Constitution of South Africa (1996).
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

(iii) Resources and knowledge acquisition: The Manual and CD, Religious Diversity Citizenship Education.

Box 6.1: Agenda PAR Stage 3 Meeting

6.4.3.3 Data collection methods: Focus group discussion, personal reflections

The focus group discussion in this third stage was designed to begin to foster the goals of transformative learning in the community of practice (*cf.* 3.4.4.3). This session was less reliant on an interview guide to structure the interaction since more opportunity was afforded to the participants for open sharing of personal experiences of religious diversity in their classes. The discussions were guided by the session agenda. Field notes written during and after the session comprised the main data collection method at this stage (*cf.* Mertens 2009: 243).

6.4.3.4 Researcher reflections on Stage 3 meetings

- **School B**: **5th May 2008 (Phumzile)**
- **School A**: **21st May 2008 (Rochelle and Tlaletso)**

The meeting on the 5th May was held with Phumzile only at School B, since the other two participants were not able to attend. My decision to continue with Phumzile on his own was related to his enthusiasm to meet and also to allow him the opportunity to interact more than in the previous meetings. The focus group transcripts (FGI 1, FGI 2) indicate the downside of having a small focus group, in that some participants may dominate the discussions (*cf.* Stewart & Shamdasani 1990: 10), which the two other participants had clearly done. In addition, going to a new site would mean going to where Phumzile lives and works and gaining some experience of his neighbourhood. Meeting with Phumzile only also illustrates that a community of practice is not confined to a particular group bound by space and time (*cf.* 3.5.6). The session at School B was repeated at School A, with some variations brought about by the participants' previous contributions.

Following the session agenda:

(i) Feedback from focus group interviews (6th and 19th March 2008)

Key points from the survey questionnaire and the focus group discussions were fed back to the participants at both meetings for comment or to verify. These were as follows:

- Problems that manifested for the teachers who attended INSET sessions, particularly the transmission-type format and the limited and fragmented content knowledge (5.4.2 SQ 9.3, 9.4; 5.4.4 SQ 11; FG2#6, FG2#8). The relationship between religion and (African) culture was specifically mentioned (5.4.4 SQ 11; 5.4.5 SQ 12; 6.4.2, FG2#8, FG2#9).
- Teachers were dissatisfied with the facilitators appointed to conduct Life Orientation INSET. The facilitators were dependent on the DoE teaching and learning support manuals and usually not able to answer specific questions or allow for discussion. The result was that there was no talk of "practice" for Citizenship education.

- The teachers tended to be over reliant on the DoE and on textbooks to prescribe the content (SQ Respondent: “We are waiting for someone to tell us what Life Orientation is”).
- The lack of constructive follow-up support from subject advisers, who tended to return to the same schools in a “policing” role rather than in an advisory or facilitating role (FG2#6).
- There had been very little or no discussion about Religion education as a focus area of Life Orientation. The *National Policy* had not been referred to in all INSET centres. Information about religions and religious diversity had also been superficial, fragmented and limited to certain observable features of religions (viz. clothing, food or marriage in religions).
- The diverse contexts of teachers, learners and their schools by designers of INSET learning support materials have not been considered. Hence, learning support materials do not always have immediate relevance for many teachers and their learners in their particular contexts (5.4.4 SQ 11; 5.4.5 SQ 12; 5.4.7 SQ 14; 6.4.2 FG2#8).
- Textbooks had been mentioned frequently, in the survey questionnaire and by the participants themselves (*cf.* FG2). Textbooks provide only superficial information with very little reference to specific issues such as the relation between religion and culture (5.4.4 SQ 11; 5.4.5 SQ 12; 5.4.7 SQ 14; 6.4.2 FG2#4a).

Key findings from the participants themselves were also shared. These included:

- The participants’ desire to be effective in how they present diversity to learners in the classroom.
- The participants’ desire to present diversity in ways that do not leave either the teachers or their learners feeling intimidated, viz. teachers need to acquire the pedagogical skills that enable them not to impose their own beliefs on the learners, or leave learners under the impression that the teacher is imposing his/her particular beliefs or values on the learners.
- Knowledge acquisition about “other” religions would add to the teachers’ self confidence as the facilitators of learning.
- The need for more information on specific topics, indigenous religions and the relationship between religion and culture in particular.

(ii) Input – policy documents

The three participants were questioned on their exposure to the national policy documents (*cf.* 6.4.3 Agenda PAR Stage 3, Box. 6.1). All three agreed that teachers do not seem to work directly from the NCS, but from textbooks or from schedules that have been constructed by the DoE. The participants were not particularly knowledgeable about the *National Policy on Religion and Education* (2003b), or that the Citizenship education focus area in the NCS should include diverse

religions and cultures. Their limited knowledge concerning religion in public policy resonates with the findings pertaining to SQ 8, that, approximately half of the sample, viz. 54% (N = 20:37) had not read the *National Policy*. In addition, the Bill of Rights in the *Constitution* (1996), the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), and the *Manifesto on Values Education and Democracy* (DoE 2001) were shared with the group to draw attention to national and international instruments of human rights that support the inclusion of religious diversity in the NCS (DoE 2003b: 11, 25, 30, 34) and therefore in the classroom.

(iii) Resources and knowledge acquisition

The issue of knowledge acquisition by teachers was raised for discussion in the light of the feedback on the INSET and what the participants and other teachers had gained from the DoE-initiated INSET sessions. Since the members of a community of practice are required to work co-operatively, the plan was that the teachers would offer suggestions on how they could contribute towards the knowledge base for Citizenship education/Religion education (the domain of interest) and the shared repertoire (3.4.6) (*cf.* Wenger 1998: 73, 2006a: 1). They were required to think about their contributions from the perspective of the contexts of their particular school communities. The DoE-generated Grade 11 *Teacher and Learner Manuals* (DoE 2007) were provided for the participants. The problems that the contents of these documents pose for learning and teaching Life Orientation in general and Religion education more specifically were discussed, particularly with regard to the random topics included and the fragmented presentation of dimensions of religions (*cf.* DoE 2007: 33).

In the meeting with Phumzile, I questioned him on his exposure to some of the religions referred to in DoE-approved materials (DoE 2007: 30ff), viz. Bahai, Buddhism and Hinduism. Phumzile pointed out that there are no followers of these religions in “the township”, and said that if there were, they were not organised in any way as to be obvious to him. But, he also said that at least three different church groups conducted their services on weekends on the school premises (School B). Phumzile was able to provide the names of the churches which indicated that these were small Zionist congregations, for whom it is common practice to use classrooms over weekends to meet and conduct their services (*cf.* Chidester 1992: 139). Phumzile explained that many of his colleagues were devout members of the Zionist Christian Church (ZCC). He said as an aside that since our last meeting he had attended the wedding reception of friends who were members of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC). Weddings in the IPHC occur on a large scale – many couples from the church will marry *en masse* on the same day. The value of Phumzile’s contribution to the domain of interest lies in his oral account of what he had observed, because there is very little extant literature on this church and its activities.

The engagement with Phumzile supports my assumption that acknowledging the "situatedness" of teachers and their learners, viz. the cultural, religious and/or denominations with which they are most familiar (the local), contributes rich and invaluable content to the community of practice. Starting with local experiences of religious and cultural diversity and moving outwards towards the unfamiliar (those religions listed in the NCS as "major" religions and others) would enable teachers and their learners to come to terms more readily with the unfamiliar. Identifying examples of religion or belief and culture in local contexts highlights the social justice element in Citizenship education/Religion education (*cf.* 3.4.4.2, 3.4.4.4), since teachers are prompted to seek out and acknowledge groups that could go unnoticed if the matrices of religions in the NCS and other support materials are slavishly relied upon (*cf.* Young 1997: 399, 2000: 23).

At both of the meetings, examples of various policy documents were provided for participants to peruse. A manual written for the purposes of the PAR (referred to as *The Manual*) (Appendix VII), containing overviews of six religions well known in South Africa and a CD with photographs was issued as a work in progress to the participants. The Manual was compiled as a response to SQ 14, in which respondents had been asked to point out the type of assistance required for the teaching and learning of religious and cultural diversity. In order not to fall prey to providing a ready-made script for teachers, the participants were asked to work through The Manual and to comment on its usefulness to the Life Orientation teacher. They were also asked to propose improvements and additions in the light of their particular school and community contexts. These would be reflected upon in the final PAR Stage (Stage 6).

Both of the meetings ended with participants being asked to think about what had influenced their tolerant approach and positive attitudes towards religious diversity.

6.4.4 Stage 4: planning for practice

Date of meeting: **22nd July, 2008**

6.4.4.1 Rationale and procedure

The meeting that initiated Stage 4 was held at School B. Rochelle had to withdraw from the project at this stage. Her reasons were related to her having to take over the teaching of additional Grade 12 Mathematics classes. Rochelle's situation is documented here since it highlights the problems that teachers experience with regard to sustaining an effective team of Life Orientation colleagues. This situation contrasts with Rochelle's response in FGI 2 (FG2#2) in which she had stated that the School Management Team was fully behind Life Orientation at her school (School A). It appears that Mathematics was still more important.

The importance of this stage lay with involving the teachers in conceptualising the meaning of "practice" in the community of practice. Classroom observations would be planned based on the insights gained from the engagement in the community of practice thus far.

6.4.4.2 Plan of action: unstructured focus group discussion (FG 4)

The agenda planned for this session is outlined in Box 6.2.

AGENDA FOR PAR GROUP MEETING: 22ND JULY 2008

(i) Fostering tolerance in the classroom (*cf.* 5/21st May), with reference to the following:

- Position of openness and desire to foster tolerance while being deeply committed to the Christian faith (Rochelle and Tlaletso);
- Influences of personal experiences on participants own knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews;
- Social contexts of schools and immediate community. Is there a correlation between a particular school community and the religious and / or cultural identity of the broader community?

(ii) Reflections on learning and teaching to date. How many lessons before and how many lessons after the onset of the project?

(iii) Discuss plans for the inclusion of Religion Education in the near future.

(iv) Strategise the way forward: how to complete the research by the end of September 2008.

Box 6.2: **Agenda PAR Stage 4 Meeting**

Following the agenda:

(i) Fostering tolerance in the classroom

In the workshops held on the 5th and 21st May, the participants had been asked to reflect on what they thought had contributed to their being tolerant and their positive attitudes towards diversity. The discussion was dominated by Tlaletso's response. The narrative account which she provided was lengthy and only the parts that contribute to answering the research question will be included at this point. The full transcript is included as Appendix VIII. It is important to keep in mind that Tlaletso is a pastor in her church and a well-respected member of her community (*cf.* 6.4.1.4, Portrait 3).

Extract FG4, Narrative 18, Appendix VIII

Tlaletso: My tolerance comes from the Bible. I don't have discrimination. If you come to my meetings [church meetings] I have had different women they don't all wear uniforms[34] – there are Methodist, Zion, ZCC, all are welcome. The Bible destroys the works of the devil. The Bible speaks of one man, Jesus Christ, because we are sharing the same Bible – why call them names? [meaning the various churches] Whether someone is a *sangoma*[35] accommodate them too. Everyone loves Virtuous Women Fellowship[36]. They take what they have learned and implant it in their families.

Phumzile: Are you tolerant with the learners?

[Tlaletso's response paraphrased for brevity]
Tlaletso explained that she is tolerant with the learners too. She relates a story of racial intolerance on the part of a group of Grade 9 boys at her school. One of the boys was responsible for writing a derogatory racist comment about her in toothpaste on a chair in the classroom.

Tlaletso: He is a coloured boy. He wrote 'v** meid[37]' in toothpaste on a chair. He is an angry boy, because asked him to sit in front, because he was misbehaving….

She then told how the girls in the class were appalled at the actions of these boys and encouraged her to report the matter to the Principal.

[Tlaletso's response paraphrased for brevity]
After the boys left the class, Tlaletso decided to take the matter to the Deputy Principal. The Principal told the boys to apologise. The boys came to Tlaletso, blaming one another. She tells how she asked the boys if they are Christians. The boys replied that they are so she said she would pray with them and that they should remember that this makes them the same. She tells how she openly forgives the boy and then prays for him and his friends, who were also implicated in the incident.

Tlaletso: I said to them, ok, I forgive you. [shortened version of the account]. I was very much angry….I could make it to be something to be in the papers [meaning the newspapers].Actually I could make a big issue out of it, because definitely it is unacceptable… unacceptable.

[ ]

It could be one boy, a drop in the ocean or two, because the majority of people who give me real respect are the Afrikaners. The Matrics [used by many South Africans to refer to Grade 12] when they are sitting at the corridor, when they are sitting there, when I pass they stand up they put their hands on the side "Môre Juffrou"…[English: 'Good Morning Miss'].

Tlaletso: So now again my tolerance even when I am in class I accommodate any question. Whatever questions they ask me… For example, "Why do some women put on blue dresses"? [suggesting that there is evidence of Zionist congregations in the district].

[ ]
(Paraphrased)
Tlaletso also shared how she dealt with boys in her class who claimed that "they are witches" and girls who "dye their hair black and have lots of piercings".

Phumzile: What about the parents of learners of such religions?
[ ]

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[34] There are numerous African Independent Churches in South Africa. The members of many of these churches are recognisable by their uniforms which are made distinctive by their colours. "Zionists" usually wear blue or green and white (men and women), whilst the women of the Zionist Christian Church wear yellow and bottle green (Chidester 1992: 135; Dube 1994: 112).

[35] *Isangoma* is the isiZulu word for a diviner. The diviners, according to African traditional belief, are able to communicate with the ancestors (*cf.* Thorpe 1991: 47).

[36] According to my informant, the Virtuous Women's Fellowship is an inter-denominational congregation of Christian women, mostly black, who meet for prayer.

[37] 'Meid' is an Afrikaans word for 'servant'. It has been, and still is, used in a derogatory sense for black women who work as domestic helpers in the homes of white people. For a boy to have called his teacher by this name was symbolic of the worst kind of humiliation, particularly since Tlaletso is a highly respected pastor in the district.

RF: One of the religions that is becoming very popular amongst young people these days is Wicca.

Tlaletso: Wicca?

RF: Wicca is sometimes also called Paganism

Tlaletso: I have heard of Paganism.

Interpretive commentary

Tlaletso's narrative about why she is tolerant started with her own faith background, viz. her role as a pastor in the community. She illustrated just how tolerant she is by referring to the women from different church backgrounds who attend her services (usually hundreds of people). The diversity is evident in their differently coloured uniforms. She even welcomes the diviners (*isangomas)* to her meetings. The statement that diviners were welcomed at her church meetings was her way of stressing just how tolerant she is, since many African Christians reject the work of diviners or traditional African healers. It seems that what the women learn in her meetings is of universal value, "they take what they have learned and implant it in their families" (FG 4 Narrative 19, Appendix VIII). The point she was attempting to make was that she extends the tolerance that she demonstrates in her church community to the classroom situation.

After Phumzile asked if she was tolerant with the learners the narrative shifted to her role as teacher. Tlaletso then related various incidents from the classroom concerning tolerance. Three main issues relevant to unravelling the meaning of practice in relation to dealing with diversity have been identified in this narrative.

a. How the teacher resolves an overt display of racism in the classroom, particularly since this display was directed at the teacher herself.

This incident had occurred about two months prior to this meeting, since Tlaletso had related the incident in the meeting with Rochelle. She retold this incident to Phumzile, indicating that it must have disturbed her. It is interesting to note that racism is often associated with white on black discrimination. In this case, the boy was "a Coloured boy" who used derogatory language to humiliate her. It is also interesting to note how Tlaletso's very deep faith enabled her to cope with the situation. She related how she had prayed for the boys and reminded them that "they are the same", because "they are all Christians". The way in which Tlaletso approached this incident provides an interesting example of responsible citizenship (*cf*. Waghid 2004). She could have made the incident public by "going to the papers", but chose instead to deal compassionately with the boys and to resolve the incident privately. Kymlicka and Norman (2000: 6) maintain that the health and stability of a modern democracy depends partly on the qualities and attitudes of its citizens…"their ability to tolerate and work together with others who are different from themselves"

(ibid). Against the background of Kymlicka and Normans' statement, the incident could have become a meaningful Citizenship education topic for the entire class to resolve (*cf.*1.9.2 (i)).

The incident provides an interesting example of how difficult or sensitive experiences become topics for reflection in a community of practice (*cf.* 3.2.3.4 (ii); Elliot 2005:36).

b. The teacher's willingness to accommodate her learners' questions about diversity.

Tlaletso provided a lengthy account of how her learners respond to how she deals with diversity in the classroom. At various points in the narrative she said that her learners had been "satisfied with [her] answers" to their questions on diversity.

c. How the teacher copes with provocative input from learners

In instances where learners had raised provocative examples of "belief" or "religious" practice, possibly in an attempt to shock, it seemed that Tlaletso was able to stand back by not revealing her shock or surprise. The narrative indicates her approach to some boys' claims "to be witches", which was that she simply responded by asking "Why do you call yourselves witches?"

The narrative that dominated this focus group provided an example of what mutual engagement could entail in a community of practice. The telling of the personal experiences and approaches in the classroom also highlighted the nature of the diversity in the school and its feeder communities, as well as the dilemmas associated with diversity in a particular school (School C). The school in question is situated in a politically and religiously conservative region, but the learners displayed more "modern" ways of thinking, particularly those learners who lived in the cities, such as Johannesburg and Pretoria. Youth who reside in the cities are exposed to youth sub-cultures (associated with heavy metal music, wearing black clothes, tattoos and body piercings) and alternative spiritualities. In Tlaletso's experience, it appeared that tension could at times arise between the worldviews and interests of the learners and the "mainline" churches (*cf.* Tutu 1994: vii) most evident amongst the teachers at the school and in the local community (*cf.* Full transcript Appendix VIII, FG 4 and SSI6#Theme 3, Tlaletso). This comment is based on the comments made by Tlaletso concerning her colleagues' shocked reactions to the learners' piercings and black clothing (FG 4).

The narrative in which Tlaletso related the boys' claims to being witches presented an opportunity to introduce Wicca to the community of practice and to attempt to put some of what the boys were claiming and showing her into perspective or to turn provocative questions and comments into learning opportunities (*cf.* Appendix VIII, FG 4 Narrative 19). It was clear that Tlaletso did not have the knowledge of Wicca to allow her to respond to the boys, especially the disturbing photographs of animal sacrifice that they had shown her on their mobile phones. Investigation of the literature

will show that animal sacrifice does not feature in Wicca or Paganism (*cf.* Gallagher 2005). Tlaletso's account indicated that because she did not have the knowledge of Wicca/Paganism, or could not, even in retrospect, attempt to research what the learners were claiming, she could not formulate appropriate questions to ask the learners to counter their claims about the activities of people who call themselves "witches", such as Wiccans or Pagans (Gallagher 2005: 220; *cf.* Cush 1997, 2008). It is quite possible that limited knowledge of religions, particularly minority religions and new movements is widespread amongst teachers of Life Orientation in secondary schools in South Africa.

This incident again indicates that the limited and fragmented presentation of religions in DoE INSET programmes, teaching and learning support materials and in textbooks does not provide teachers with the knowledge and skills to effectively mediate learning in the classroom in relation to provocative or sensitive areas (*cf.* 5.4.5 SQ 12). Moreover, the reference to "major" religions in the NCS seems to be the reason that new religions or minority religions are ignored and even misconstrued. It could be argued that teachers who do not have a comprehensive knowledge of religions may be dismissive of the beliefs and practices of religious or spiritual orientations that they do not really understand, and liken being silent or dismissive of them to being tolerant[38] (Avery 2002: 116, 122; Gutmann 1996: 157).

An example of classroom interaction to illustrate this latter point is evident in an extract also from FG 4 (Appendix VIII) in which Tlaletso related how she deals with clothing and the wearing of religious symbols in different religions in her classes:

Extract FG 4, Narrative 21 Appendix VIII

Tlaletso: Roman Catholics like their rosary. According to Christianity it is unacceptable, [according to] Exodus 20:4, but when I discuss about what they understand, I don't criticise them, but give them the facts about the Bible as they are also Christians believing in the Bible'.

[*Imitates the learners*]

'*Ma'am is this allowed*?

If you like it, if you believe it, put it on it's yours'.

This part of the narrative also confirms a lack of content knowledge on the part of the teacher concerning the reasons why adherents of religions wear symbols. Whilst the situation lends itself to investigating *why* Roman Catholics use rosaries for example, the opportunity is dismissed with: "If you like it, if you believe it, put it one, it is yours".

[38] Brookfield (2002) refers to this as "repressive tolerance".

In addition, the entire narrative also suggests a narrow understanding of tolerance (*cf.* 1.9.3 (iv); Afdal 2007: 91). Whilst Tlaletso claims that she is tolerant towards the learners in her classes, further along in her response she betrays a superficial understanding of denominational differences. Tlaletso made some sweeping claims about her own perspective on Christianity in relation to other or different denominations with which she was not familiar ("Mormons". *cf.* Full transcript Appendix VIII, FG 4, Narrative 22). It is possible that a "thin" understanding of differences could cloud the teacher's judgement in the classroom, especially when theological differences arise amongst learners. For this reason participation in a community of practice provides the optimal conditions in which teachers could acquire more accurate and complete information and through a dialogical and reflective process work towards resolving the deficits in content knowledge (*cf.* Mezirow 1991: 77; Swidler 2004: 769) (*cf.* 3.2.3.4).

(ii) Reflections on learning and teaching to date

The two participants pointed out that they had had no time to prepare lessons for the purposes of the research, as examinations had been written during May and June and the schools had closed for the three-week July holidays. These responses illustrate some of the problems associated with maintaining the flow of participation in action research.

(iii) Strategising the way forward: **planning to complete the research by the end of September 2008**

In order to take the research to another level, a plan of action was devised with the teachers. The plan of action entailed visiting the schools for classroom observation, followed by another meeting for feedback and reflection on the transcripts. An input phase followed at this point, in which the community of practice concept was elaborated upon so that the observation phase would be placed into perspective. The following plan of action was agreed upon together:

- Examples of learning and teaching strategies would be discussed in this meeting and once more before the observations;
- Participants would plan for the observation stage independently;
- Dates for classroom observations would be decided upon;
- The group would meet one month after the observations to discuss their lessons and the transcripts;
- Further discussions would take place concerning the community of practice for teacher-learning;
- Ways to sustain the community of practice would be discussed;
- Semi-structured one-to-one interviews would be conducted with the participants during the month of November, as a final opportunity for reflection and sharing.

6.4.5 Stage 4 (continued): reflection and planning for action

Date of meeting: 14th August, 2008

6.4.5.1 Rationale and plan of action

This meeting was planned to set dates for and to prepare for the classroom observations in the weeks to follow. The session was mainly an input session in which ideas were shared with the participants in preparation for the classroom observations.

6.4.5.2 Data collection method

My own field notes and personal reflections on an open group discussion comprised the main data collection method.

6.4.5.3 Personal reflections on the meeting

An informal discussion held with Phumzile after the workshop proved to be the most informative aspect of this PAR stage. This discussion contributed to the idea that a significant aspect of the PAR process was to encourage participant teachers to look into their own contexts as a starting point for religious diversity. On a previous occasion Phumzile had pointed out that at least three different churches use the school premises on Sundays (FGI 3). On this occasion he provided the evidence of which and how many churches used the school premises.

At the end of this particular meeting, I observed that the school's security guard is a member of the ZCC. Phumzile explained that this man is a spiritual leader in the ZCC and people often come to the school for him to pray for them and to be "cleansed". Cleansing involves drinking water that has been blessed by the spiritual leader (called a prophet) (Chidester 1992: 140; West 1975: 50). Phumzile explained that quite a number of his colleagues are ZCC members. He also mentioned that recruiting church members by colleagues at some of the other schools in the area is common practice. This conversation concerning the prevalence of African Independent Churches in the area verified the need for more explicit and detailed information on these churches, a point which had also been made in the survey questionnaire by a few of the respondents (5.4.4 SQ 11).

Whilst driving Phumzile home after the meeting, I commented on the building going on in the area. His response was:

> Yes, "we" (meaning Blacks) are not like "you people" (meaning Whites), because you buy and sell, buy and sell. We buy according to our pockets and then build on as we can afford it. Also, we tend to stay in our houses for a long time, because we bring our ancestors home to the house.

This interaction indicated that engagement as participants in the community of practice continued even as we drove home after a formal meeting. Conversations of this type contributed towards

creating the shared domain. Moreover, the action research approach to the study meant that extended discussions on "local" incidents of religious and/or cultural beliefs and practices were made possible. The difficulty was alerting members to draw on the opportunities that their social contexts provided (*cf*. 3.2.3.4 (v) *Awareness of context)*. The role of a knowledgeable other (*cf.* Mezirow 1991: 207; Dowson 2007: 93) who would alert members to their local experiences of religion and culture became ever more significant as the potential for knowledge creation increased in the community of practice (*cf.* 3.4.4.5 (iii)).

6.4.6 Stage 5: Observation and Reflection

6.4.6.1 Rationale and purpose

The purpose of the classroom observation was to determine the way in which members approach religious and cultural diversity in the classroom. The purpose of this method of data collection was to investigate whether or not the PAR discussion groups had made an impression on the participants' views concerning the development of their own knowledge base for effective and meaningful practice. The purpose of the classroom observations was also to determine if these teachers were comfortable teaching about diverse religions, beliefs and cultures.

6.4.6.2 Plan of action: Classroom observation

The action associated with this stage entailed spending a day each in Schools B and C, observing the teachers at work in their classrooms. An observation schedule was compiled beforehand and is included in Box 6.3.

Classroom Observation Schedule

1. The general atmosphere in the class: the relationship between the teacher and learners.
2. The layout of desks in the classroom.
3. The choices of topics for the lessons. What determined the choice of the topics? (DoE schedule; text books; own choice)
4. Methods of presentation of topics by the teacher. How does the teacher represent religions and cultures in lessons?
5. How did the learners respond to the topic?
6. How did the learners respond to the teacher?
7. Based on the observations, what conclusions can be drawn in terms of the main research question?

Box 6.3: **Observation Schedule Classroom Observation PAR Stage 5**

6.4.6.3 Personal reflections on the observation phase

(i) School contexts

Teachers will be referred to as 'Teacher T' and 'Teacher P' respectively in this stage to emphasise their roles and identities as teachers or educators in the context of their schools.

- **School C**: **21st August, 2008**
  Observation of four classes across grades was anticipated at School C.
- **School B**: **26th August, 2008**
  Three different Grade 12 classes were to be observed at School B.

During the classroom observations at both schools I positioned myself at the back of the class, meaning that I was visible to the learners at all times. At School C the teacher did not introduce me to the classes and the learners ignored me most of the time. Teacher T asked for my input once, but for the remainder of the time I did not interact with her or the learners. Teacher P on the other hand introduced me to each of the classes at School B. Although I did not interact with any of the classes for most of the time, the teacher and the learners acknowledged that they were aware of my presence. Teacher P asked for my input once and I asked his permission once to pose a question to one of the learners. I also posed another question to the same learner whilst exiting the classroom at the end of the lesson.

6.4.6.4 Classroom observations: School C Teacher T

(i) General observations of the situation, approach and structure of lessons at School C (Observation 1)

Duration of lessons: 35 minutes

Teacher T's home language is seTswana, but she is also able to speak English and Afrikaans. The media of instruction at the school are English and Afrikaans, but predominantly Afrikaans. Teacher T is able to code-switch between English and Afrikaans (*cf.* 6.4.1.4, Portrait 3 ~ Teacher T) as well as various African languages (seTswana and isiZulu mostly), an ability which lends charm and humour to her teaching style.

The level of English amongst most of the learners was good and all tended to respond to Teacher T in English. The atmosphere in the classes was laissez faire as learners sauntered into the room and settled down. Learners were polite towards Teacher T and towards one another, reflecting the general ethos of the school. They were open and willing to speak and share their views on the chosen topic. The teacher dominated from the front of the class during each lesson, using a question and answer technique to facilitate discussions.

The lesson was recorded and extensive field notes taken to complement the recording.

The topics of the lessons were as follows:

- Lesson 1: Language and Culture - Grade 9
- Lesson 2: Marriage in different religions - Grade 11
- Lesson 3: Language and Culture - Grade 9 (repeat lesson)
- Lesson 4: Marriage in different religions (repeat of the Grade 11 lesson with a Grade 10 class).

The strategy used by Teacher T included whole class teaching, with a textbook as stimulus (Grade 9) or a handout on marriages in different religions (Grades 10 and 11).

(ii) The lessons

The observation of only one of the Grade 9 lessons has been analysed and presented, since interesting issues arose in this lesson (Lesson 1), which did not arise again in Lesson 3. The learners in the first of the Grade 9 classes were more responsive to the teacher in Lesson 1 than were the learners in Lesson 3. Learners in Lesson 3 seemed to be content to follow the lesson from the textbook, guided by the teacher.

Lesson 1: **Language and Culture (Grade 9)**

Approach to the lesson:

The teacher introduced the lesson as *Language and Culture*. The lesson focused initially on different languages and culture and thereafter shifted to religions. The lesson started with the teacher reading from the prescribed textbook with learners taking turns to read. At various points the teacher posed a question to stimulate discussion around a point made in the passage in the textbook. The questions that Teacher T posed were posed in such a way as to stimulate response and were often quite provocative. The responses from the learners to the teacher's prompting were influenced by the research that they had conducted independently for an assignment on a religion of their choice. Various themes could be identified in the lesson, making it fairly difficult to decide what the main focus of the lesson was. These themes seemed to be:

- Theme 1: Language and culture
- Theme 2: Values
- Theme 3: Religions, symbols, rituals.
- Theme 4: Culture and change: African children losing touch with African culture and values as a result of assimilation into a dominant culture.

Only certain extracts from this lesson have been included to show the meaning of mutual engagement in a community of practice (3.4.4.3). The full transcription of the lesson is included as Appendix IX.

Extract 1: **PAR Stage 5 Observation 1 (TLAOBS 1.1)**

Teacher T: By the way, how many languages are there in South Africa?
Learners: Eleven
Learner: No, twelve

[Class spends time debating the number of official languages in South Africa. *Teacher T asks the learners to name the languages]*.

Learner: Scamtho.
Teacher T: *Scamtho* is nearly fanagalo. But its not fanagalo. It is Afrikaans, Zulu, Xhosa...
Learner: It's like slang.

[*Conversation continues for some time as learners offer examples of fanagalo*].

Teacher T: OK so those are the languages we have in our country. OK so do we have same cultures?
Learners : No

Teacher T: The values – are they the same?
Learners: No
Teacher T: Are the values the same because the languages are not the same? Can someone explain to us?
Learner: Um Ma'am. With all the different cultures and stuff, we are brought up in different ways the values might be similar but they are not all the same.
Teacher T: What is similar between all those values?

[*A conversation developed around how children should show their respect for adults. All "cultures" require children to respect adults. This is demonstrated in how children address people older than themselves and in African culture, how children approach adults].*

Teacher T: Yes, with all cultures …respect is the most important. But even though we respect differently hey? ..how do you respect adults? Do you call them by name?
Learners: No.
Teacher T: So there is a way you must address people. You must say *Malume*… .(seTswana word for *uncle].* You don't look them in the eye. You look down hey?
Learner: Ma'am why don't you look them in the eye?

[*Some comments come from the class whereby learners offered explanations]*

Learner: Because when you look them in the eye it says you are equal.
Teacher T: He says when you look them (adults) in the eye you are saying you are equal. (When) you are talking to your friends you know you can speak the way you like. So the thing is you have to bow down a little bit with your eyes you know….*kyk af* (Afrikaans for lo*ok down*)!!
Learners laugh.

Learner (who is Afrikaans speaking offers an explanation of how to address adults):
You say Mr. or Mrs. and if they (adults) say call me by my name then you say *Oom* (Uncle) or *Tannie* (Aunty) you don't address them by their names.
Teacher T: Ok, then it means it is the same as other cultures. In Tswana they will say *Ausie,* Zulus will say *Usisi, uButi* the brother and in Afrikaans they will say *Tannie*, *Oom* en *Tannie.*
Learner: We say *Oom* en *Tannie* (Uncle and Aunty), but then call our brothers and sisters *boetie* and *sussie* (brother and sister).
Teacher T: *Sjoe* (wow) we're all South African!! Can you see that we're all South African. Like I said, what is the same in all of our cultures?

This extract from the lesson has been included to indicate the terrain where the teacher was most familiar. Her knowledge of the languages used in South Africa was related to her having lived in a township. Life in a township had also given her exposure to the various pidgins spoken in the townships. *Fanagolo* is a pidgin language based mainly on isiZulu, seSotho and Afrikaans. It was the language used mainly in the gold, diamond, coal and copper mining industries in South Africa so that people from various parts of South Africa could understand one another. It was also used by the mine "bosses" so that they could understand and be understood by the mine workers[39]. '*Scamtho'* (from the isiZulu word, *Iscamtho*) is a "new" language associated mostly with Soweto youth. *Scamtho* is a language based mainly on the grammars of isiZulu and seSotho, and includes some Afrikaans words (therefore, also known as '*kasie*-taal'). As an African, Tlaletso was able to respond to the learners when they raised *Fanagalo* and *Scamtho* as examples of languages spoken in South Africa. These languages are an indication of how South Africans have learned to accommodate multilingualism in South Africa[40].

Being an English speaker, some of the words that the teacher and learners had used in the African languages escaped me. Hence there were gaps in the transcripts which both teacher-participants would note in the post-observation meeting (6.4.6.7). These discussions illustrate the value of "learning and identity in practice" in Wenger's theory (*cf*. 3.4.4.3; 3.4.5.1). A discussion of this point has been included in 6.4.6.7.

Extract 2: **PAR Stage 5 Observation 1 (TLAOBS 1.2)**

Learner 1 (addresses Teacher T):
You know I wanted to ask something? Is there a difference between Christians and Catholics?
Learner (adds in the background): They are all just Christians.
Teacher T: They fall under Christians all of them.
Learner 2: Ma'am, ok you get Christians, and the Catholics and Anglicans are denominations of Christianity. They are like separate groups I think.
Teacher T: Oh they are denominations? OK. Then what's Christianity?
Learner 2: Christianity is a belief I guess. I guess it's just the overall belief in God.
Teacher T: OK the overall belief in God. So the Catholics all of them they also come into Christianity?
Learner 2: Yes.
Teacher T: OK some Christians you can see with their clothes. Different clothes. Different colours. You know when we had the Women's Day[41] it looked so beautiful. They looked so beautiful! All colours. We had red and white, blue and white, green and white, yellow, white and green, black and white. All colours. Green and yellow. It was so beautiful. Because it was Women's Day. We were all Christians gathered together. And it looked so beautiful. One could see the real diversity in the religion, when you looked at all those colours.

(Breaks off and the conversation shifts)

African religion… how can you see that this person is in African belief?

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[39] *cf*. Wikipedia, Fanagalo, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/fanagalo. 14th September 2010. Accessed 20th September 2010.
[40] *cf*. Wikipedia, Tsotsitaal, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsotsitaal.
Sidlala Sonke, "Know your kasie taal". Sunday 20th December 2009. www.cellcfootball.co.za/mobi.fullnews.cfm?story=1874. Accessed 20th September, 2010.
[41] National Women's Day on the 9th August is a public holiday in South Africa.

This interaction revolved around a learner's question pertaining to the differences between Christian denominations, notably between "Christians and Catholics". In terms of the discussion that ensued, the original question on whether or not there is a difference between Christians and Catholics seemed to have been forgotten, especially since the teacher referred to her experiences of differences in Christianity from the perspective of the African Independent Churches. The way in which the teacher responded seemed to assume knowledge of the Independent Churches in the class, because she did not explain the phenomenon. This part of the lesson indicated that the teacher was clearly aware of the diversity within Christianity, but did not take any steps to provide much of an explanation as to the reasons for these differences. The teacher then immediately changed direction and posed a question on African religion. A discussion ensued on African languages and rituals (*cf.* Appendix IX, Full transcript TLAOBS 1.1), but with no explanations of the tacit knowledge expressed by some of the learners for the benefit of all of the learners in the class. The teacher simply moved on and asked for another example of a religion from the class, as is shown in Extract 3 below.

Extract 3: **PAR Stage 5 Observation1 (TLAOBS 1.3)**

Learner 1: Ma'am, also the Muslims. Once, during… I don't know what period it is, but during that period they fast and they cover…
Teacher T: Is it not the period of Maradan (*sic*)?
Learner 2: Ramadan.

[*All get the pronunciation correct after various learners offer*]

Learner 1: I think so Ma'am, I don't know Ma'am, and also they cover the tombstones. They say
[continues] they don't want the spirits to go in there. They fast for 40 days…

Various learners interject: Huh 40 days!
Someone fills in: 'From early in the morning'.

Learner 1
[*continues*] … and then oh yes…
Teacher T
[*interrupts*]: 40 days, during the day, they eat only in the morning?
Learner 1
[*continues*]: They don't drink any water they don't eat any food and they don't eat anything. Only at night they eat a small portion of food. Then round about 10 o' clock at night they eat a small portion of food.
[*Various comments from the class*]

Teacher T: Cindy?
Cindy: Muslims have a calendar in Ramadan time. It has times and then they are allowed to eat in those specific times. It's usually after sunset. And then they have a feast. They said the adults fast from sunset to sunrise and the children will eat just before they go to bed and then when they wake up. They wake up early to eat even for example if they do sport they are not allowed to have any water or anything during the fast. And you fast…. the girls usually from 10 years and boys from 12 years.
Teacher T: From 12 during the day?
Learner 2: No the ages.
Teacher T: Oh the ages. And the girls start from 10. I wonder why from 10 the girls?
Learner 2: Girls mature earlier than boys.
[*Argument ensues amongst learners as to whether this is true or not*].

Extract 3 comes from a part of the lesson in which the teacher asked the learners for another example of a religion – the response was "also the Muslims". The class discussion that ensued focused briefly on the month of Ramadan. The teacher's use of the incorrect term, "Maradan", indicates that the learners appear to know more than Teacher T knows. This may be because the learners had to research a religion of their choice for a project that Teacher T had set. A similar situation, where the teacher uses an incorrect term, arose later in the discussion when Teacher T asks who in the class knows something about "the Buddhaists" (*cf.* Full transcript Appendix IX, TLAOBS 1.3). One of the learners again corrected Teacher T with: "Ma'am, Buddha, they believe in Buddha". The incorrect terminology may simply be related to English not being Teacher T's home language.

With reference to both Extracts 2 and 3, the lesson verifies what had already emerged in FG 4, PAR Stage 4, that while the teacher was aware of the "main religions" and clearly willing to include learning about diverse religions in her classes, she had not acquired the depth of knowledge to correct inaccuracies from the learners, to answer their questions or to pose probing questions. It seemed moreover that Teacher T repeatedly referred to the reified understanding of terms and concepts about different religions that she had acquired from having attended INSET sessions or as presented in textbooks. The evidence that religions had been treated "only briefly" and "not in any depth", as noted in responses to SQ 9.4 (5.4.2 Table 5.6d), as well as in FGI 2, seemed to prevail in Teacher T's handling of religions in her classes in spite of her participation in the research.

Lesson 2: **Marriage in different religions (Grade 11)**

To introduce the topic for this lesson, Teacher T provided the class with a handout on marriages in different religions, starting with Bahai, then Buddhism, Christianity, and so on. These were set out in the order that they were extracted from Wikipedia by the author of the lesson in the DoE-generated teaching and learning support materials (DoE 2007: 33ff).

Teacher T started with a question: "What is marriage".
The discussion that followed this question is presented as Extract 4.

Extract 4: **PAR Stage 5 Observation 1 (TLAOBS 1.4)**

Learners [*together*]:
'A relationship between a man and a woman'.
Teacher T [*responds with a provocative question*]:
Is it not between a man and a man?
Learner 1 [*responds with*]:
It's all about preference whether one prefers gay/lesbian relationships or white or black.

Learner 2 [*very articulate*]:

> Homosexuality is bad. If you look at Christian ethics, Islamic ethics all religions are opposed to same-sex marriages. ….ethics are saying that homosexuality is bad. You go right through the list of all the religions in the world they say homo-sexuality is bad. Unfortunately human rights world wide say that everybody is the same as everybody else. And because you choose to practice your discrimination on them you deserve to get punished. I'm being quite militant about this, but it's how I feel. Otherwise none of us here knows why it happens because lets face it, it isn't some thing that would really work out in reality would it? OK, but none of us knows how it happens, and for it not being properly natural, I'm going to say something, that in all mammals homosexuality occurs. In no other groups so far I know OK does homosexuality occur. So is it just unnatural or preference, a twist?

[*Voice is drowned out by the class reactions*]

Teacher T: OK, that does make sense. It doesn't happen in all mammals, but it does happen in human beings.

[*Teacher returns to the handout and reads about Bahai marriage. Teacher and learners then lose sight of the topic. Topic deviates into a conversation about relationships. Learners challenge one another's opinions on long-distance relationships, whether or not their parents approve. Many of these learners are boarders in the school hostel*]

[*After some time Teacher T returns to the handout*].

Teacher T: This is the Bahai. Do you know who the Bahai are?

[*The lesson shifts again into a conversation on monogamous marriage, polygamy and polygyny. Can a woman have five husbands?*]
[*Lesson ends before teacher and learners can establish who the Bahai are.*]

As with the Grade 9 lesson, the discussion shifted from one topic to another. The learners were interested in the topic of same-sex marriages and kept distracting Teacher T away from the handout, which was clearly irrelevant for them or uninteresting.

Teacher T demonstrated that an ethos of openness could be allowed in the class in her choice of lesson topics, but did not seem to have the background or the resources to pick up on the points made by her learners. The view on homosexuality and human rights is strongly articulated by a Learner (Learner 2), but not picked up on adequately by the teacher, also betraying a lack of knowledge about the relationship between religion and human rights. The teacher also misinterpreted what the learner was saying about homosexuality in mammals. Similarly other interesting issues could not be probed, such as conceptions of morality and ethics in different religions, because the teacher did not have adequate content knowledge to develop and add to the ideas raised by the learners. This situation draws attention to the importance of ongoing teacher-learning in subject areas where personal beliefs and values may influence the way in which content is presented in the classroom.

Lesson topic: **Marriage in different religions (repeat of lesson with Grade 10)**

Twelve learners only were present in this class as the rest were away on a camp. By way of introduction, Teacher T initiated a conversation about an assignment on religious diversity which the class was due to submit. Positive responses to the assignment were displayed by the learners. Using the same handout as was used with the Grade 11 class, the teacher then proceeded to steer the lesson to "Marriages in different religions". A section of this lesson is included as Extract 5.

Extract 5: **PAR Stage 5 Observation 1 (TLAOBS 1.5)**

Teacher T: Is Satanism a religion?
Learner 1: It's a cult.

[A *brief discussion follows on what a cult is and then peters out. Learners offer opinions about Satanism and a discussion ensues on the rumour that Satanism is rife in the district. The teacher does not pursue this topic which obviously has some fascination for the learners*].

[*Teacher T* gives *the learners the same handout as was given to the Grade 11's on Marriages in different religions*].

Teacher T: OK, Marriage and religion. We have spoken a lot about religion. Food that they eat, clothing of all these different types of religions. Now we are going to talk about marriage.

[*Teacher reads the first line of the article on the handout*]

Teacher T: In virtually all religions marriage is a long-term…..

[*Breaks off, turns to one of the boys and asks*]:
What is marriage? Can you explain what marriage is?

[*A discussion follows*]

Various learners:
A marriage is between two people**.**

[*After some time discussing what they think marriage is Teacher T asks the provocative question again*]

Teacher T: Can marriage be between a man and a man?
Learner 2: It shouldn't be allowed two men living together.

[*The learners begin to "theorise" on the origins of gay marriages*].

[*The teacher asks one of the learners to continue reading from the handout. The learner is Afrikaans speaking and says that her English is not that good and declines. The teacher tries to encourage her. The learner then becomes quite animated and responds to the question on gay marriages. This learner will be referred to as Sunette - a pseudonym*].

Sunette (shouts out): Do you know what? Do you know what? [*addressing Learner 1, a boy*].
It's not wrong dude. It's not wrong. Did you know back in ancient history before all this new Bibles came along they *mos* [sic] said Roman people used to have relations with the same sex.
[*The learner has interspersed English with Afrikaans words. This code-switching is normal in this dual-medium school*].

Learner 3: And only used to sleep with women if they wanted to make babies.
Sunette: Ja. …[ ] Only with the introduction of new Bibles….We people that is gay people that is gays do have rights the same rights as white people and black people not to discriminate to one other and the same rights as you have ….uh….um…[*seems at a loss for words*]

[*The class laughs, amused at her loss for words, unperturbed by the disclosure of her sexual orientation. She then engages in an animated discussion with two boys who started to voice their opposition towards same-sex marriages. Sunette expresses a string of inaccuracies pertaining to gay issues and the Bible in order to defend gay people. The teacher allows the discussion to continue, with no intervention and without correcting the inaccuracies or intervening in any way, except with a few probing questions directed at the class. The teacher does not return to the handout on marriages, allowing the debate on same-sex marriages to continue to the end of the lesson*.

(iii) Post-classroom observation reflections: **School C and Teacher T**

In FGI 2 and FGI 3, Teacher T had suggested that learners should have the opportunity to "talk" in Life Orientation classes and not to be restricted to the writing of what she perceived to be irrelevant tasks. In all of the lessons observed, this was clearly what Teacher T encouraged in her classes. The lessons observed, however, did not seem to have a central focus and tended to switch from one topic of interest to another. On the downside, it seemed as if Teacher T did not have the content knowledge to correct inaccurate statements made by the learners, to probe for deeper understanding of a topic or issue, or to answer some of the questions that learners raised about religions, moral issues and human rights issues (*cf.* 6.4.6.1, *Rationale and Purpose*). This situation tended to limit learning to the commonsense knowledge that had shaped her views and those of the learners. A problem that lack of content knowledge poses for the teacher is that sensitive issues or inaccurate perceptions of lifestyles and beliefs different from those of the majority represented in the class may result in unresolved conflict and the perpetuation of non-recognition or misrecognition of difference (see the lesson, *Marriage and Religion*) (*cf*. Young 1997). The lesson raised a further issue concerning the teacher's knowledge base, viz. that teachers need to learn to combine knowing about various topical issues involving religion, appropriate pedagogy and human rights and values for a maximalist interpretation of Citizenship education (1.9.2 (i)) (McLaughlin 1992; *cf.* Van Doorn-Harder 2007: 102).

On the upside, it was interesting to note that Teacher T was deliberately provocative and challenged the learners with her questions on controversial issues. She also encouraged open discussion of sensitive issues amongst the learners, in this case allowing one of the learners in Grade 10 to openly express her sexual orientation and for the class to engage in a fairly heated argument on the issue. The openness observed in Teacher T's interactions with her learners was hence in keeping with the claims that she made in FGI 2 concerning the need for the teacher to encourage "acceptance" amongst learners of one another. In a post-observation discussion with Teacher T, the class in which the learner disclosed her sexual orientation was touched on briefly. The teacher did not pass any value judgement but said that she had been surprised at the girl's outburst. If that is so, my contention is that the way in which the issue was handled also demonstrated a maximalist interpretation of Citizenship education, even if the teacher was unaware of it at the time (McLaughlin 1992: 236).

Teacher T was clearly aware of the challenges associated with diversity, but having observed her in the classroom it became increasingly obvious that allowing discussion of sensitive issues in relation to diversity is only one side of openness. The limited way in which the teacher was able to follow up on learners' questions, comments and opinions emphasises the necessity of knowledge acquisition and ongoing teacher-learning (Wenger 1998: 214) to shape "practice" for democratic Citizenship education in the broadest sense. The classroom observations indicated that "practice" for Citizenship education/Religion education entails a sophisticated blend of subject or content knowledge and the pedagogical skills required to advance the dialogue about issues of human difference in ways that embody integrity, fairness and respect whilst simultaneously fostering the critical consciousness required to challenge learners' taken-for-granted assumptions of others (Sears 1999: 4, 5; *cf.* Gearon 2004; O' Grady 2009: 45ff) (3.2.2). These observations of the activities in Teacher T's classes provide meaningful subject matter for discussion and debate in developing what a sense of "practice" in a Citizenship education community of practice should entail (3.4.4).

Another interesting observation of Teacher T's interaction with her learners entailed the overt expressions of her Christian faith in the classroom. Whether or not teachers should express their personal commitments in the classroom is the subject of ongoing debate (*cf.* Fancourt 2007: 53ff; Ferguson 2006). Yet Teacher T justified the need to focus on diversity from the perspective of her faith, rather than allowing her faith to inhibit the learners discussions of diversity issues, a position contrary to what one would normally expect (*cf.* Graziano 2005: 304).

6.4.6.5 Classroom observations: School B Teacher P

(i) General observations of the situation, approach and structure of lessons at School B (Observation 2)

Duration of the lessons: 30 minutes

All of the learners at School B are black, a fact which reflects the township context of the school (*cf.* 6.4.1.4, Portrait 2).

The language of instruction was English, although Teacher P commented that the learners' home language was mainly seTswana. He indicated that the learners may want to express themselves in seTswana rather than in English. The choice of topic for all three lessons was the same. The topic was quite random, for the purposes of the observation, which suggested that Teacher P may still not have attempted to include religious diversity, or had completed the section earlier on in the year. As it turned out, the former assumption was the more accurate.

The classes consisted of about 27 (of a possible 37) boys and girls mixed together, except for one class which consisted of seven girls only.

(ii) The lessons

Lesson topic: **How religion influences peoples' behaviour**

The classes had been provided with a reading[42] the previous day on how religion influences people's behaviour. The teacher divided the class into three large groups and assigned a task question to each to discuss and to resolve. The groups read together and shared the contents of the reading with one another for about 15 minutes. Thereafter the teacher invited the learners to participate in whole-class discussion and a feedback session. Teacher P recorded points made by the learners on the chalk board.

Since each of the classes observed presented interesting incidents, each has been commented on by referring to Class 1 (Extract 6), Class 2 (Extract 7) and Class 3 (Extract 8) respectively.

Extract 6: PAR Stage 5 Observation 2 (PHUOBS 2.6)

Class 1

The members of the group reported back on strong and weak points concerning religion.

The discussions were facilitated by the teacher and key points were recorded on the chalk board as the learners responded to the arguments presented in the reading. The teacher was at ease with talking about the issues presented in the reading. The lesson was facilitated by the teacher, who constantly encouraged the learners to elaborate on points made.

The learners generally engaged positively with the task questions, although some of the information on the handout was unknown to the learners making it difficult for them to respond. The lack of knowledge by the learners betrayed that they did not engage regularly with topics of this nature.

Learners at this school are influenced mostly by Christianity, therefore their responses were made in relation to Christianity and the Bible.

Extract 7: PAR Stage 5 Observation 2 (PHUOBS 2.7)

Class 2

The teacher asked the learners to take turns reading the dialogue between two characters in the handout (*cf*. Footnote 13).

A learner comments: In spite of religion there are still crimes such as the priest who was convicted for raping children.

The teacher responded by emphasising the point made in the list of task questions on the handout: *The problem is religion itself - not just the people.* Teacher P then asked the learners to comment on this statement.

[42] The handout out to the class was taken from: Hofmeyer, B. Machagan N, Mndende, N, Thornes,P. Shuter, *Religion Studies Grade 12. Learner's Book.* The title of the extract was: "How religion influences people's behaviour".

Teacher P: What would be the strong points of this argument?

Learners are very quiet. The teacher prompts, but learners are still very quiet. Teacher P rephrases the question and tries to prompt the learners to respond. He suggests that there is truth in the statement, because people do things in the name of religions. Teacher asks for names of religions which learners then give.

One Learner suggests: Religions should be banned!

Teacher P was suddenly distracted and left the class to have an official document completed by colleagues. Learners were left working on the tasks.

Extract 8: PAR Stage 5 Observation 2 (PHUOBS 2.8)

Class 3

Teacher P introduced this lesson by asking the learners for a list of religions that they have heard about. One learner responded with '*Indian',* another '*Ghandi'*.

Teacher P then asks about African traditional religions. The learners did not respond to this question. The class remains silent.

A learner: We are all Christians.

Teacher P is surprised at the response and suggests that they have grown up with African tradition and that the learners do not know the difference between African tradition and religion. The teacher did not pursue the idea and returned to the reading.

Teacher P: Let's look at the strong points and weak points in Bongani's argument.

[*Bongani is one of the characters in the dialogue in the reading provided by the teacher as a resource*].

Learner 1: Bongani presents arguments in favour of religion.
Learner 2 addresses the teacher saying that he has changed religions, from the ZCC to Islam.

The teacher was surprised, but did not comment. This was the moment in the discussion when I asked the learner to explain why he had changed.

Learner 2: I became bored with Christianity and like the way the Muslims do things, like praying to Allah.
Learner 3: Many religions is [*sic*] confusing and when someone converts to another religion he will adapt to a new way of life.

Teacher P asks Group 2 to respond to their question. He reads Group 2's task question out loud:
'Is it true that people need religion to help them behave decently'?

Learners in this group agreed that it is possible to be "decent" without religion.

Teacher P: If one is not in any religion, where does your morality or decency come from? Can you be born with it?

Learner 1 [*responds again*]:
It is impossible for a person to be born with morals.

Teacher P: If not from religion, where does it come from?
Learner 4: The government!
Teacher P: Where does it come from?
Learner 4: They make laws, have values, Bill of Rights.
Teacher P: Do you know any good people without religion?
Learner 5: My uncle has never been to church (implying that his uncle is a good man).
Teacher P: Before Christianity, how did our people form their own beliefs?

A few of the learners mumble answers. The class agrees that religion helps people to be good.

Teacher P turns to Group 3 and reads the question on the handout**.**

Tasneem [*another of the characters in the handout*] says that the problem is religion itself, not just people. She gives reasons by referring to three religions to illustrate her point.

Teacher P: Do you think that Tasneem is giving fair illustrations or is she misrepresenting the religions? Learners struggled to answer this question. The lesson ends before this question can be pursued.

[*My question to Learner 2 when the lesson had ended: Why did you convert to Islam*?]

Learner 2: Because it keeps us away from crime.

(iii) Post-classroom observation reflections: School B and Teacher P

Teacher P and I spoke about the learners and their exposure to religious diversity after the class observations. The learners had been open to the discussions generated by the questions in the handout given to them by their teacher, but quite obviously struggled to respond. When questioned about this Teacher P at first used lack of time (*cf.* FG2#4a) as an excuse for not including topics on religion in his Life Orientation classes more frequently. He justified the learners' limited ability to address the issues embedded in the task questions by referring to the lack of time allowed in the curriculum documents for Life Orientation.

Teacher P also suggested that knowledge of religions may be tied into one's being "a religious person". He seemed to think that the learners did not have much of a background on religious diversity, because his own background is inadequate. We discussed the possibility that knowing about religions is not dependent on a person's being a religious person.

I also asked Teacher P if he and his Life Orientation colleagues held regular meetings. This question was posed in the light of the discovery made when he left the class to visit a colleague during the observation of Class 2 (*cf.* PHUOBS 2.7), which was that his colleague was teaching a lesson to Grade 10s on religions. This discovery led to the realisation that they should be talking to one another about lesson preparation and content. He pointed out that the staff "very seldom talk about LO issues". He stated that his colleagues sometimes ask him for help with the requirements of Life Orientation, but not with specific lesson plans or content.

I asked Teacher P about the boy who had told the class about his conversion to Islam (PHUOBS 2.8). Teacher P admitted that he had been surprised himself, since the boy's uncle is a high-ranking member of the ZCC in the community. We discussed the possibility that the influences of Islam might be more prevalent than he was aware of. This situation reflects the downside of the community of practice, viz. when diversity in membership is limited to participants who belong to or

relate to the same religion or group, this may result in limited awareness of the diversity in the neighbourhood.

6.4.6.6 Personal reflections

Observations of the two teachers in their respective schools led me to conclude that in the case of School C (Teacher T), topics on religions were included more frequently than in Teacher P's case. The learners in School C seemed to be more conversant with religion topics even if these did not always go too far beyond basic factual information. It seemed that in the case of the Grade 9 learners, the assignment that they were required to do had improved their knowledge of religions, perhaps beyond that of the teacher.

In the case of the learner at School C who disclosed her sexual orientation to her peers, an interesting and significant issue for discussion as a Citizenship education topic was raised, in the context of the need for tolerance and acceptance as democratic values (Nieto 2000: 340). The way in which the situation was handled in this class by the teacher was, even if unbeknown to her, in keeping with the principles of anti-homophobic pedagogy proposed by various educationalists. Barnard (1993), Sears (1999) and Richardson (2007a, 2007b) for example (the latter in the South African context), have drawn attention to the importance of including lesbian and gay learners in the diversity framework in the school curriculum. In this case the teacher did not probe the learner for details about her sexual orientation, but simply allowed her to express her opinion on the subject of same-sex marriages and being gay. However, the possibility exists that this might not always be the case if the teacher does not entertain homosexuality, especially since the topic came up in relation to religious diversity (*cf.* Graziano 2005: 307).

A question that came to my mind as the researcher, while observing Class 3 (PHUOBS 2.8) at School B was: What does religion mean to these learners in this context? This question was prompted by the boy who said that he had converted to Islam from the ZCC. While the teacher was concerned about the meanings of "religion" and "culture" in relation to his school context, it seemed that he had not given much thought to religious influences in his neighbourhood other than Christianity and the African traditions. It is more than likely that the influences of Islam in this area were extending across from the Indian/Muslim neighbourhood on the other side of the town (*cf.* FG2#8). His limited knowledge of religions did not allow him to capitalise on the opportunities offered by his context to generate meaningful learning experiences independently of his HoD, his DoE subject advisers and other members of staff. Hence, the boy's comment that he had converted to Islam was not picked up by the teacher. Teacher P used the lack of time on the timetable and a shortage of textbooks (materials) as excuses not to develop this area of Life Orientation, which may have been an indication of a lack of confidence in addressing religious and cultural diversity in the classroom (*cf*. Graven 2002, 2004).

It was disturbing to note that in School B, teachers had been including topics on religious diversity in other Life Orientation classes, unbeknown to Teacher P. The lack of communication between Life Orientation teachers became more obvious as more time was spent in the school.

Each of the observations as discussed above opens up opportunities for engagement in a community of practice. The kinds of issues that emerged as a result of classroom interaction may not be easily resolved given their controversial nature (viz. religion and homosexuality; or the reasons why young people convert from one religion to another). These kinds of issues emphasise the need for communicative spaces in which teachers are able to engage dialogically and reflectively (*cf.* 3.2.3.4) with colleagues in terms of what such issues could mean from their own perspectives as teachers and for their learners. For many teachers who depend on their own frames of reference, conversion to a religion other than the dominant one represented in the school or being homosexual may be unthinkable. These examples illustrate that "citizenship" and "education for citizenship" (McLaughlin 1992: 241) require "concrete specifications" and cannot simply be treated as "abstract notions", as McLaughlin suggests (ibid: 241). These and similar situations require teachers to consider appropriate pedagogies in which teachers and their learners may examine diversity dilemmas and what they mean in the actual contexts of the classroom, and not merely in abstract terms as phenomena characteristic of a pluralist society (*cf.* McLaughlin 1992; Nieto 2000: 313). The challenge for teachers when such examples emerge unexpectedly in the classroom is whether or not they are able to think in more "inclusive and expansive ways" as Nieto (2000: 313) puts it, thereby fulfilling the social justice element in the curriculum (*cf.* Young 2000: 23).

6.4.6.7 Stage 5 (continued) post-observation meeting: reflection

Date of meeting: **September 17th, 2008**

(i) Rationale and plan of action

The purpose of this meeting was for participants to peruse the transcripts of FG 4 and the classroom observations.

Copies of the following transcripts were made available to the participants:

- Focus group discussion 4: July 22
- Classroom observations: School C 21st August
- Classroom observations: School B 26th August.

Participants were asked to comment on the accuracy of the transcripts, to suggest amendments and to comment on their choices of topics and teaching and learning strategies as these had been viewed through the eyes of the researcher.

(ii) Comments on the transcripts by the participants

The following comments were made by the participants:

- Teacher T complimented Teacher P's group activity approach to his lessons.
- Reading the transcript from Teacher T's lesson on *Language and Cultural Difference* with a Grade 9 class, both Teacher T and Teacher P pointed out the mistakes that I had made in the field notes (and hence the transcript) as well as the gaps that had been left where words in African languages had not been picked up during the observations. Also, I had not picked up how cultural practices had been adopted by senior learners in the school to demonstrate their superior status over the Grade 8 learners. Hence, the laughter from the class when Teacher T said *"kyk af"* (Afrikaans for look down) in the lesson (TLAOBS 1.1). The learners knew that she was referring to Grade 8 learners who would need to look down when in the company of Grade 12's, until the younger learners had gone through their initiation, a tradition at this school. Phumzile contributed significantly to the discussion of this practice at Tlaletso's school. In African societies, not meeting the eye of adults is related to traditional African initiation rites. Until a person has experienced the rite of passage into adulthood, he or she is not entitled to look an adult in the eye. This would be a sign of disrespect. Only once young people have gone through the initiation ceremony can they raise their gaze as equals to the adults in a community. It seemed that two cultures were at work at this school: the "culture" of the school and a "tongue-in-cheek" application of an African tradition. This interaction provides an illustration of what Wenger (1998: 165) meant regarding the changing of identities through "participation" and "non-participation" in a community of practice. This is an instance where the teachers' knowledge of cultural norms enriched learning in practice (3.4.3; 3.4.6.1 (ii)).
- On reading the transcript of the Grade 11 lesson on *Marriages in different religions* (*cf.* Stage 5 TLAOBS 1.3), Teacher T came across the comment that she had not picked up on the learner's reference to same-sex marriages and human rights. Teacher T's response: "I didn't have the knowledge of human rights to be able to comment".
- Teacher P came across the comment on his discovery that a colleague had also included religious diversity in her Grade 10 Life Orientation classes. He responded by saying that he should have been talking to his colleagues about Life Orientation content.
- In their responses to the question on strengthening the community of practice concept in their schools, the participants said that they would be involving their colleagues in group planning for the coming year.
- As for areas that participants felt had still not been covered, they voiced their concerns once again about the lack of resources and the limitations of textbooks which failed to cover specific content, such as the relationship between religion and culture, and information on minority religious groups or denominations.

6.4.7 Stage 6 Final PAR Stage: reflection
Semi-structured one-to-one interviews

6.4.7.1 Rationale

Rochelle was included at this stage. She was able to return to the project as she had returned to teaching Life Orientation for the last few weeks of the year. The sixth and final PAR stage engaged the three participants in one-to-one semi-structured interviews, which allowed each participant to reflect on the research process as they had experienced it (*cf.*1.5) and the outcomes of the inquiry (Wadsworth 1998: 16). A way forward for each participant in his or her context was discussed in terms of sustaining the community of practice once the formal PAR process was completed.

The interview guide was based on transcripts of the focus group discussions that constituted the PAR sessions, the observations at the two schools and the post-observation meeting on the 17th September.

6.4.7.2 Plan of action: semi-structured one-to-one interviews

The interview guide for the semi-structured interviews is included as Appendix X**.** The interviews were conducted in the following order:

- Phumzile School B: 17th November 2008
- Tlaletso School C: 21st November 2008
- Rochelle School C: 3rd December 2008.

6.4.7.3 Summary, analysis and interpretation of the semi-structured interviews

The data from this series of interviews were clustered into seven themes. On the grounds that the semi-structured interviews comprised the final stage of the PAR, these will be interpreted and discussed in relation to the PAR phase as a whole, the reason being that the responses from the participants were reflections on the first five stages of PAR and often contained repetitions of what had been said before. Only the main themes have been included in this section. The full transcripts of the interviews are included as Appendix XI.

(i) SSI6#Theme 1: Positioning of religion education in Life Orientation (Citizenship education)

In the set of responses that contributed to how the participants thought that Religion education should be positioned in Life Orientation, all three of the participants affirmed that they had recognised the close relationship between Citizenship education, Religion education and values. For this reason the participants concluded that more time should be allocated to Citizenship education in the school curriculum. Phumzile maintained that two periods per week are inadequate

to cover the various focus areas that comprise this subject. He specifically recognised the close links between constitutional values and religious values.

> Values are definitely covered by all religions. So religion is the source for all these values'. 'Forgiveness which is a biblical value; respect is a biblical value; love is the main one in religion.

Tlaletso thought that topics on religion should not be constrained by the assessment standards in the NCS. Confining the learning to the content suggested by the assessment standards is limiting and learners cannot "be open in their thinking".

Rochelle planned to structure Religion education across the learning outcomes and not confine it to one learning outcome to be covered in a single period of time in the year. This focus area is based on principles or values, "where learners learn to show respect for one another". It's not a section that is completed, "tested and then put in a cupboard…It's a living thing, not something that can be learned once off, but continuously enhancing the lives of the children".

(ii) SSI6#Theme 2: **Perceptions of the extent of teacher-learning in the community of practice**

Responses to the questions that comprised this theme indicate that shifts in the thinking of the teachers towards Citizenship education had started to occur as a result of their participation in the community of practice. Both Phumzile and Tlaletso set their responses against a critique of INSET, Phumzile in terms of what INSET fails to achieve in terms of teacher-learning, and Tlaletso in terms of the constraints imposed on teaching and learning by DoE assessment requirements. Phumzile specifically raised the issue that the INSET programmes centre on complying with policy directives and moderating one another's portfolio files.

Each of the respondents expressed the extent of their learning in the community of practice in different ways. Phumzile had started to use terms describing the role of the community of practice for teacher development. At least three contributions to teacher development as a result of participation in a community of practice could be identified in his response:

- Communities of practice serve as spaces for teachers to "experience reflection on teaching" (*cf.* FGI 2).
- Communities of practice allow teachers to go "deeper into the issues of the subject"; and
- Communities of practice help teachers to develop a sense of "practice" for Life Orientation.

Tlaletso pointed out that involvement in the research led her to realise that she was on the right track in relation to how she "teaches for tolerance". She also realised that she needed to be more conscious of insensitive language when referring, for example, to gay and lesbian people. She referred back to the observation lesson in which one of the learners declared her sexual orientation to the class. With this experience being so close to her own world it made her confront her own attitudes towards her learners' life-stances and rights:

> You know that child made me to have so much compassion. Whereas I used to say*:* 'Aag these gay people - God did not create Adam and Steve…'. I would pass those remarks, but later I realised uh-uh I shouldn't be saying those things I have to refer to these people in the correct way'….
> 'So as I was saying that it has taught me, you know, to emphasise how to take this very seriously and to be strong on it that I must have tolerance … but it shouldn't be a light thing…I must emphasise it more and more… and I have to encourage my learners to know that this is a serious issue we shouldn't take it lightly….

Rochelle said that she had changed her perspective on the meaning of diversity for the learners in her classes. Involvement in the community of practice had led her to "listen on a different level" and with a greater awareness of the need for open communication in the classroom. She stressed that exposure to differences in belief in the community of practice had helped her to accept that there are different views and that her learners have the right to hold different views.

(iii) SSI6#Theme 3: **Value of the experience of the research to sustain communities of practice at the respective schools**

Phumzile's response drew attention to the notion of "practice" once again and the importance of working together with colleagues in order to deepen their understanding of Citizenship education/ Religion education:

> It [communities of practice] was new to me and then I came to realise how important it is to me in my practice. I am not alone ...it will be very beneficial to me to be exposed to the other colleagues in a community of practice. It is important that we must come together and bounce ideas with one another [*cf*. Stage 5 Post observation reflections].

Phumzile explained that he and his colleagues were expected to come together and talk about their subjects, but since only he had been responsible for the Grade 12 classes, he didn't think that he could engage with his colleagues. His experience of sharing ideas with his colleagues was thus limited. If more than one teacher is responsible for teaching in a grade, the chances of engaging with others are increased.

Rochelle planned to hold workshops for her colleagues in Life Orientation for the following year. She had already started the process by suggesting that they work through the "policy on religious

education" [viz. *the National Policy*] and become familiar with the requirements. It seems that her colleagues were showing some enthusiasm towards the idea of working collaboratively.

A problem experienced by Tlaletso at her school was getting past what she referred to as "rigid Christians". The area in which her school (School C) is situated is characterised by conservativism in Christianity. The problems experienced by Tlaletso focused mainly on tension between charismatic Christians and members of Afrikaans Reformed churches at the school. It appeared that the tension was experienced in extra-curricular activities and not necessarily in the classroom. Tlaletso related how the teachers who were members of charismatic churches were behind selecting the pastor who was the main speaker at a school camp organised by the Student Christian Association earlier that year. She related how activities at the camp went awry when a prayer meeting led by the pastor in which children "were falling and crying", was not well received by some learners from the Reformed Churches. The children phoned their parents and asked to be fetched from the camp. The differences amongst the church groups were evident in how teachers involved in supervising the Student Christian Association at the school disagreed on how it was being run. One way in which the difference manifested was in the prayer meetings:

> When we pray we normally like holding hands... that's what I find them doing at school… so then we hold hands. Some of these people never hold hands because they say they don't understand why should we hold hands?

Tlaletso drew attention to how the particular church affiliations of her colleagues had spilt over into school activities. The differences may inhibit their working harmoniously together in Life Orientation. Tlaletso was of the opinion that her colleagues would need to resolve their denominational differences through "talk" and learn to "tolerate" and accept one another's denominational preferences in order to take the project forward at School C. An interesting discovery from Tlaletso's response is that the problems of intolerance were experienced amongst her colleagues and not the learners.

Tlaletso once again drew on her faith background, this time to justify why she needed to exercise tolerance and to be responsible for encouraging her learners and her colleagues to do the same. Her response highlighted a downside of communities of practice: that the particular religious faith of teachers may be the reason for establishing boundaries between the various communities of practice to which they belong (*cf.* Wenger 1998: 104) (3.5.1; 7.4.1). Life Orientation teachers could also be members of religious communities whose practices are perceived to be irreconcilable, which could result in non-participation in the relevant community of practice (*cf*. Perry 1999: 66). Tlaletso on the other hand clearly shows that the teachers' deep religious faith does not necessarily have to be a drawback for teaching religious and cultural diversity, provided that they are able to stand back from their own particular religious frames of reference to fulfil the

requirements not only of the curriculum, but of *the Constitution* as well[43] (1.9.3) (*cf.* Wenger 1998: 105; Perry 1999: 173; Ferguson 2006: 10).

Tlaletso's response suggests that "having tolerance" is non-negotiable. This comment is reminiscent of the comment that she had made concerning learning content on diverse religions and cultures in a focus group discussion in Stage 2 (FG2#8). Her response to this question in the semi-structured interview indicates that tolerance towards difference is fundamental to the success of collegiality amongst colleagues and therefore fundamental to the success of Citizenship education/Religion education in the school. Taylor's reference to authentic relationships in fostering transformative learning is significant here (*cf.* 3.2.3.4 ((vi) *Authentic relationships*).

(iv) SSI6#Theme 4: **Teacher-learning through participation in a community of practice**

The purpose of the interview questions that contributed to this theme was to direct the interviewees towards reflection on participation in a community of practice. The original question was: What have you learned from the other participants in the group?

Phumzile said that he had observed that the experiences of the three teacher-participants in the PAR are different in terms of the contexts and profiles of their learners. In addition, he thought that learners who attended School C were more diverse, providing opportunities of more direct experiences of religious diversity than did his school (School B):"In our case diversity is something that is theoretical you know. We can only talk about the other people. We don't have a direct experience of them".

I questioned him about Islam in his area and reminded him of the boy in one of his Grade 12 classes who had confessed to converting to Islam: "Do you find that because of [area name withheld] not being very far away, that Islam could be something more concrete, that the learners could discuss and investigate? Phumzile suggested that perhaps Muslims in the area hide their background because they are in the minority, that as a result "it is still very difficult to see the impact of Islam or to feel it in our discussions" [in the classroom]. Why this should have been the case was unclear, since Islam is so obvious in the area across town (FGI 2). The township in which School B is situated is dominated mostly by Christianity and "all the others" [viz. religions], according to Phumzile, are in the minority. It is for this reason that he suggested that all of the religions would be studied in the abstract. It was interesting to note that Phumzile had still not realised that the denominational differences within Christianity in his area provided a rich resource to draw from in terms of defining diversity in his neighbourhood and for investigation in his classes.

[43] In his Developmental Scheme, William Perry (1999: 173, 180) referred to this 'Position' as "Commitment", viz. a person is able to "commit" to an own religious worldview or position, while respecting the beliefs and values of others.

He mentioned the following African churches in his neighbourhood:

- The Zionist Christian Church,
- Pentecostals,
- "Born-agains (*sic*), you know the Born-again Christians. They call them the evangelicals".

Although Phumzile seemed to be knowledgeable of the African Independent Churches represented in his school and the broader community, he was under the impression that his knowledge of religion was limited and expressed this in deficit terms. He suggested that the issue of religion may not have received that much attention in his classes, because he "is not that much into religion" (a point that he had raised previously, after the classroom observations, PAR Stage 5). He added that perhaps in Tlaletso's class religion had received more attention because of her background as a pastor in her church. Phumzile persisted with the belief that good teaching of Religion education must be dependent on one being "a religious person". Phumzile seemed unaware of his own talents, insightful comments and fairly good knowledge base that are more so the criteria for good teaching than possibly being "a religious person".

> **RF**: And now that you've been exposed [to the topic], do you think that in future you will take on religion more seriously?
>
> **Phumzile**: Ja, especially up to our experience of xenophobia. That's when we realise that it's important to include it otherwise it leads to unnecessary conflict and then suspicion of one another… so to dispel those suspicions. I think we must tap into the religious diversity that is there in our communities, in our environment.

Rochelle also indicated that she had become more aware that the four "set ups", viz. her own school, Phumzile's school, Tlaletso's school and my situation at the university presented different experiences of diversity. Each member of the community of practice could learn from the others. Rochelle extended the meaning of diversity beyond religious and cultural diversity to include the personal and economic situations of her learners:

> You come in the class and you realise that diversity is basically what you find in everyday life. I realised that some of these children easily fit in, some are just shunned away… and uh..even though it wasn't in a teaching setup I could see the lifestyle of the children at home… and I used that in my lessons.

Rochelle's observations about the economic situation of her learners could be interpreted in the same light as Tlaletso's experience of the learner who confessed her homosexual orientation in the class and Phumzile's reference in an earlier focus group to the HIV/AIDS-related child-headed households in his community (FG2#4b; Stage 5 TLAOBS 1.4; SSI6#2). Learners' rights and personal well-being are social justice issues and draw attention to the need to develop social

justice pedagogies to promote responsible citizenship and Citizenship education that promotes compassion (*cf.* Cochran-Smith 2004; Waghid 2004, 2009; Nussbaum 2002: 295).

Tlaletso responded to this question by referring back to Rochelle's account in FGI 2 (FG2#10 (iii)) concerning how a particular religion had been taught to her daughter. Tlaletso had been impressed with the way in which Rochelle had handled the situation:

> Rochelle was very firm as a parent to her child. When she was taught something that she didn't want she took a stand and said no I am not going to allow that. And that made me to learn something from her to say man this woman stood for her child and stood for what they believe in… .

What Rochelle had been concerned about specifically was the way in which a particular religion had been taught to her daughter. She had been under the impression that the religion had been presented as "The Truth" when she lives with another kind of "Truth", which she perceived as being incompatible with the former (Griffiths 2001: 31; Perry 1999: xxxi). At the time she told the story (FG2#10 (iii)), Rochelle could not remember exactly what the religion was, but it is possible that she had been talking about Wicca or Paganism. This assumption was based on her references to "worshipping" the moon.

Tlaletso's response demonstrated the limited understanding that both teachers and parents may have of democratic values, in this case tolerance and inclusivity. Ironically, whilst emphasising that teachers and learners "must be tolerant" (*cf.* FG2#8), Tlaletso expressed a degree of intolerance towards those religions or denominations of which she had limited knowledge (viz. the religion taught to Rochelle's daughter). This intolerance extends to Phumzile's right *not* to believe or not to participate in formal religion (viz. his admission to being a "lapsed Seventh Day Adventist") (*cf.* 6.4.1.4, Portrait 2).

The contents of these interviews therefore indicated the fine line between teaching about different religions and beliefs and being committed to one's own faith (*cf.* Perry 1999: xxxi; Griffiths 2001: 150). It also indicated that teachers may not yet have acquired an understanding of tolerance as being inclusive, viz. the willingness to include the views even of those whom we find to be objectionable, with whom we disagree, or whom we disapprove of or dislike (1.9.3 (iv)) (Avery 2002: 127; Afdal 2006: 92; *cf.* Nieto 2000: 340). These responses demonstrate how the teachers' meaning perspectives may unconsciously influence attitudes towards diversity in spite of their openly declaring tolerance towards difference (*cf*. 3.2.3.1).

(v) SSI6#Theme 5: **Value of situated knowledge to the domain of interest**

In responding to the question: What do you think the others could learn from you? Phumzile referred to the African Independent Churches in his community. He made the point that different cultural backgrounds will influence the interpretation of Christianity in his neighbourhood:

> I think it's the brand of Christianity the brand in the context of an African culture. Mmm, you know…the impact of Christianity to people of African origin or the understanding of Christian teaching. I am sure that's what we offer this side…and then learners with a different cultural background will offer the same Christianity in a different context. You see the lines between culture and religion are so blurred sometimes they don't realise they are crossing into culture itself.

Phumzile shared two examples from his experience to show how African traditional practices exist side by side with African interpretations of Christianity in his community. He related how he had attended the initiation feast of a young woman he knows into "sangomahood". He also related an experience when a Grade 9 boy came to school dressed in white robes, carrying a staff. When Phumzile questioned him, the boy explained that he is a priest in the church. Phumzile suggested that the boy's position may have been inherited from his grandfather. This incident is an example of a how a learner's particular religious experience had spilled over into the daily experiences of a "secular" school context. These examples should be read in conjunction with the other examples provided by Phumzile of the direct experiences of African Christianity and African tradition and culture characteristic of his immediate environment (*cf.* FG2#8 (iii)). The examples highlight what diversity means in Phumzile's neighbourhood and show how his lifeworld and those of his learners provide meaningful material for creating the domain of interest and the shared repertoire of a Citizenship education/Religion education community of practice.

However, that these stories were even told indicates the necessity for teachers in general to be made aware that such stories *should* be told and *should* contribute towards "knowledge" in Citizenship education. In other words, the value of such occurrences should not go unnoticed in terms of contributing to a "history of religions" knowledge, and knowledge "about" *all* conceptions of religion practiced in South Africa (the national) (3.4.4.1, 3.4.4.5) (*cf.* Chidester 1996; Grimmitt 1994).

Phumzile's examples are not unique to his context, but these incidents provide material for further study that go beyond what might be suggested in the NCS and in textbooks (3.4.4.1; 3.4.4.5) (*cf.* DoE 2003a: 25).

The following points were extracted from Tlaletso's response:

- Her knowledge of different churches: "mission" churches as well as African churches (the ZCC and other Zionist movements);

- Her support of the importance of "talk" in dealing with diversity and also for resolving conflicting interpretations of the Biblical text amongst different denominations in her classes.

Tlaletso's response draws attention to the link between different Christian denominations and interpretations of the Bible. The example that she provided is related to the ZCC's interpretation of the Bible to support the practice of jumping or dancing by the male members during church services (the dance is called the *mkhukhu*).

> 'Yes Ma'am. The ZCC people they are jumping. Where, where in the Bible does it say we must jump'? You know they will talk of all that and I will bring them down to say no, no, no, no this is a democratical [*sic*] country. Everybody has a right to his own religion, his own Christianity, his own beliefs it's correct. So you are not going to criticize them. You have to accept them as they are. So we need to take this to the teachers and say 'Let's give the children a chance to talk, let them talk'.

"Talk" in the classroom is important, therefore, so that differences can be brought into the open and discussed (3.4.4.3).

In her response Rochelle drew attention to the poverty of many of her learners and how they respond to religion as a result. Although it seems that Rochelle did not answer the interview question, her response was significant for its uniqueness at this stage in the PAR:

> Some of the learners are changing their religion because of what they can get out… it's quite sensitive… Like I said the community is very underprivileged. The social-economic situation is bad and then there's this hand that just sticks out, making provision for them giving them food packages and things like that so they would change and follow a different belief system but that is not out of a desire to do so. It's because they are tired of their lack of having, so that is one of the things that's being experienced here in this community.
>
> And like I had a group of learners […], Grade 11, and this one boy I knew him, Grade 8, Grade 9, Grade 10 he was Christian and now Grade 11 he says he must leave at 12 because he must go to pray. OK, this is new. And then during the fasting period I saw him having on his *topee.* OK this is new and then I just said to him now when did all this happen? And then I realised they are just tired of not having and that changed that.

Tlaletso's response indicates that theological differences between learners from different denominations may be a source of tension in the classroom. Her response to her learners and thus to this question draws attention to what else the teacher needs to know to be in a position to mediate Citizenship education learning effectively and meaningfully (*cf*. 3.2.3.4 (iv), 7.3.1). In the light of teaching and learning theory, dilemmas such as those involving different scriptural interpretations should be solved by engaging learners in activities that help them to investigate the sources of theological differences and to work together dialogically to solve the problems (*cf.* Biggs 2003: 9; Bakker & Heimbrock 2007: 13; Baumfield 2003). According to both Mezirow (1991: 77)

and Swidler (2004: 769), engaging dialogically in problem-solving requires that participants have an accurate and complete picture about an issue or dispute. Moreover, both parties ought to be open to alternative interpretations with the view to learning from one another. This approach to problem-solving draws attention to the inadequacy of Tlaletso's response in her narrative above, "you have to accept them as they are" (Tlaletso above, line 4). Tlaletso's approach seems to suggest that silence in relation to areas of tension demonstrates tolerance (Le Roux & Möller 2002: 184; Nieto 2000: 43). However, silence and passive acceptance are not likely to address sources of difference, and prejudices, stereotypes, intolerance and discrimination may prevail (Banks 2002: 138; Avery 2002: 126; Nieto 2000: 46).

(vi) SSI6#Theme 6: **Reflections on classroom observation to generate learning opportunities.**

The teachers were given the opportunity to reflect on the classroom observations conducted in PAR Stage 5.

Phumzile provided at least two interesting observations concerning his classroom experiences and those of his learners:

- That his learners knew very little about "other" religions. For this reason it would be important to introduce to the learners teachings about "other" religions so that they view Christianity as a religion amongst other religions and not necessarily as a religion superior to others. In this response Phumzile connected knowledge of different religions with learning to be tolerant (*cf.* SQ 10 Themes).
- That learners need to understand that cultural experiences influenced the writing of the Bible: "And then the teachings were largely a response to the experiences of those times and therefore religion must be understood in context".

Tlaletso explained that her learners expressed how they enjoyed the discussions during the observation lessons and asked her when they would be able to continue:

> They [the learners] said 'Ma'am why are you now stopping? Ma'am let's continue we were discussing so wonderfully', and they were listening, especially the class of that little girl, you know Sunette [the girl who declared her sexual orientation to the class, *cf.* PAR Stage 5, TLAOBS 1.5]. They were very much interested, 'but Ma'am we want to hear more'.

Tlaletso's response was important, since she referred back to the situation in the classroom, when Sunette had publicly declared her sexual orientation, without being prompted to do so. Tlaletso's reflections drew attention to how open the class had been towards Sunette's sexual orientation, possibly aided by Tlaletso's acceptance.

These two responses draw attention to the role of the teacher as a mediator of learning for promoting an open classroom in which "talk" is both valued and goal-directed. The role of the teacher as mediator requires the teacher to be an interpreter of the information (*cf.* Roux 2007a; Ferguson 1999; Ferguson & Roux 2003b) provided by the learners, to redirect comments and commonsense knowledge to counter stereotyping and to be prepared and willing to allow conflicting views and values to be expressed in the classroom (Gearon 2004; Barnes 2009; Stradling & Rowe 2009), thus contributing to meaningful practice (*cf.* 3.4.3).

(vii) SSI6#Theme 7: **Resources and materials.**

The participants were asked to evaluate their learning and teaching resources. The Manual referred to in Stage 3 was returned to in this interview for further comment. The participants were asked whether they had managed to read The Manual. The following points were established from the responses to this question:

- Not one of the participants had read the entire manual. This was interesting considering their ongoing criticisms of the limited scope given to religions and religious diversity in available textbooks.
- All three thought that the way in which the religions had been set out was useful and leads to other sources for more information, such as on "the Internet".
- Visual materials additional to the photographs and pictures on the CD, specifically "video material" relating to the content was essential for learners to gain a better understanding. Film could prove to be a valuable substitute for the "real thing". Pictures could be added to The Manual, as well as links to websites or other relevant works. Digital resources were not always available in some schools.
- Engagement with adherents or devotees would be meaningful to understand concepts from religions with which participants are not familiar.
- More materials on values should be provided.

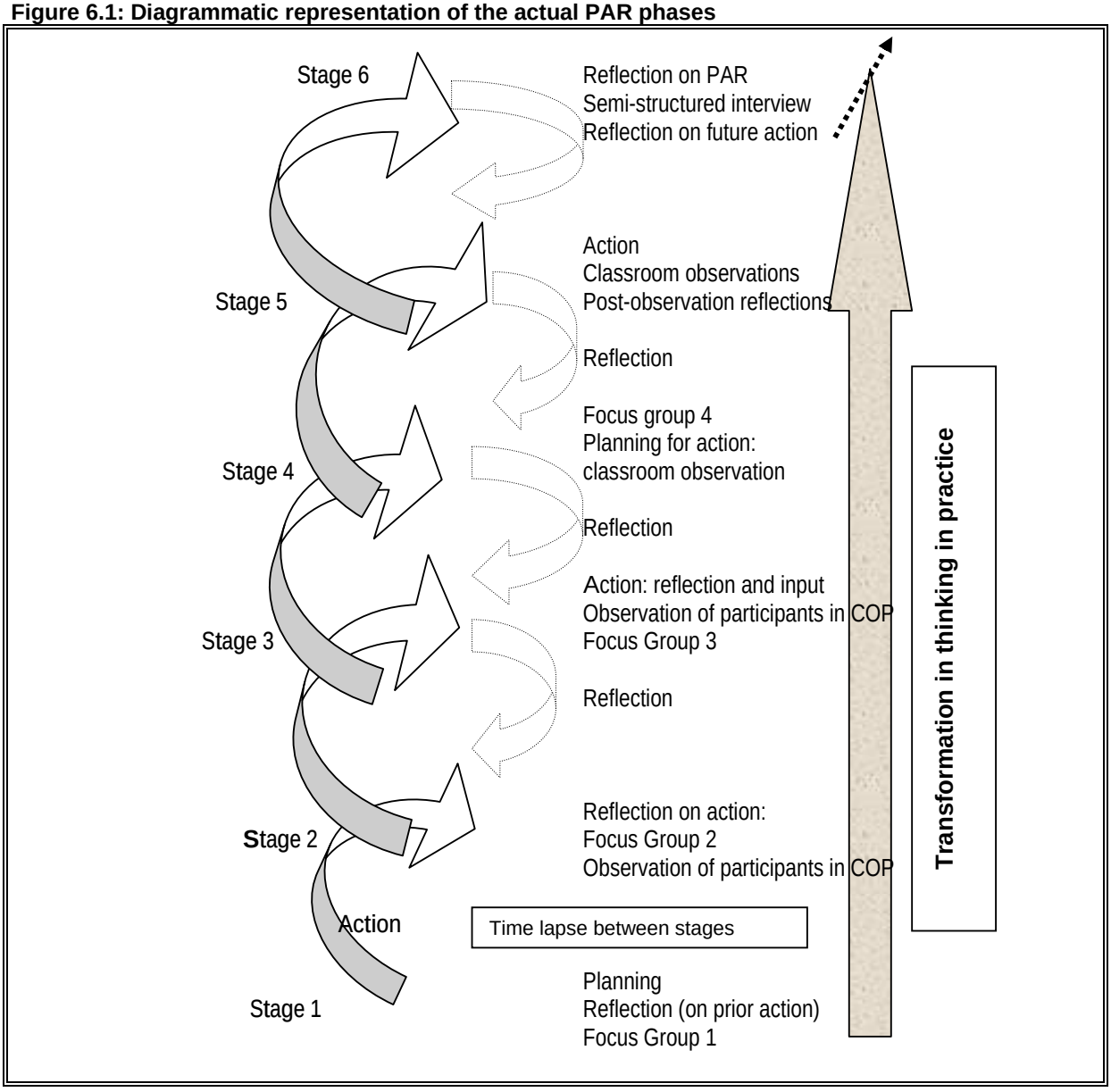
6.5 REFLECTIONS ON THE PAR PROCESS

A review of the PAR process as an approach to addressing the research questions upon which this study was based is presented as a conclusion to this chapter. In general, PAR provided the research stance on teacher-learning in a community of practice and drew attention to the areas required for teacher-learning and development for effective Citizenship education/Religion education. Conducted against the background of the survey questionnaire, the PAR process indicated how together with the survey, the qualitative research could deepen an understanding of the types of knowledge that teachers require for a Citizenship education/Religion education

"practice" (Wolcott 1994: 180; Denzin & Lincoln 2000: 3; Chiu 2003: 177; Flick 2006: 12; Reason & Bradbury 2006: 2).

The diagram (Figure 6.1) below represents the PAR phase as it occurred. The anticipated PAR stages were presented in Chapter 4 (Figure 4.2).

Figure 6.1: Diagrammatic representation of the actual PAR phases



The following were established from the PAR phase:

- That some teachers continue to rely on a mechanistic or instrumental view of education - that 'someone' should be responsible for providing learning and teaching support

materials as if these contain foolproof “recipes” for classroom practice and are naturally transferable from one social context to another (*cf*. Hoban 2002: 13, 39).

- That enabling teachers to think of themselves as “inquirers” and “reflective practitioners” requires, as Hoban (2002: 13) suggests, a “framework to support long-term teacher-learning”. This point is particularly relevant for teacher-learning about the complexities associated with diversity in all of its forms (*cf*. Nieto 2000; Slattery 2006: 143ff).
- It cannot be taken for granted that teachers automatically have the breadth and depth of knowledge required to begin to speak about “a practice” for Citizenship education/Religion education (including the relevant knowledge, skills and values); including knowledge of democracy, citizenship and democratic values.
- There is therefore value in teachers learning content knowledge through participation in a community of practice to develop a democratic Citizenship education “practice” (2.3; 2.4) (Westheimer 2008). The community of practice or discursive community concept does indeed provide a supportive space for teachers to learn the meaning of democratic and personal values and content for Citizenship education/Religion education, but how these could be sustained remains a challenge.
- Participation in the community of practice led to a heightened awareness of *values in operation*, or the imminence, or reality of values in the classroom (Kerr 2002; McLaughlin 1992: 241), in the sense that PAR afforded the teachers the opportunities to investigate what they understand by “tolerance” and the dilemmas associated with their actions in and outside of the classroom. Intolerance and lack of knowledge of certain social or religious groups co-exist.
- Teacher development initiatives are required that direct thinking away from textbooks as the primary or only sources of knowledge. In addition, “learning in practice” for a subject like democratic Citizenship education in which teachers have little or no prior learning of its principles and key issues, requires sustained periods of time for deep and independent learning to occur (Biggs 2003: 9ff).
- A significant source of knowledge for Citizenship education/Religion education in South Africa resides in the “situated knowledges” of schools and their communities (*cf*. Moore 2006). However, knowing how to recognise “situated knowledge” also requires the guidance of knowledgeable others, or effective mentors, in teacher development initiatives (*cf.* Dowson 2007: 93).
- There is clearly a need for effective mentors to ensure that teacher-learning in communities of practice for diversity occurs in meaningful ways.
- Different kinds of knowledge are required for teachers to be effective mediators of learning for Citizenship education/Religion education in their own “practice” (*cf.* Chiu 2003).
- That the very nature of teaching for democratic Citizenship education requires some degree of personal transformation (*cf*. Taylor 2009: 5) in relation to how teachers think

about diversity and values. Such transformation may be incremental over time (Cranton & Roy 2003: 88).

In the next and concluding chapter, the value of PAR in relation to the community of practice approach to this research will be reviewed more specifically for its contribution to identifying the kinds of knowledge that teachers need to define a “practice” for Citizenship education/Religion education. A critique of the communities of practice approach is presented as well as a description of the limitations of the study and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 7

FINAL REFLECTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In the introduction to Chapter 1 of this dissertation I quoted from a special report by Abdelfattah Amor concerning the place of Religious education in transmitting knowledge and values pertaining to all religious trends, inclusively, so that people learn to live in harmony with one another (Amor 2001: 2). Whilst I agree with Amor's vision, I suggested in return, however, that this noble idea is unlikely to be realised without teachers who share a vision of "diversity as a human hallmark" (Sears 1999: 5). In the description of the responsible citizen in the Citizenship education entry in the NCS (DoE 2003a: 11) the assumption is that teachers would have acquired the professional knowledge base to enable their learners to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and values required to qualify them as "politically literate" and competent citizens. Against the background of inadequate teacher development programmes for curriculum reform in post-apartheid South Africa (cf. 2.2.3; 2.2.4), and South Africa's social-political history of segregation, this study was undertaken to focus on a teacher development option for Citizenship education, democracy and religious diversity specifically.

This final chapter includes the following:

- An overview of the study in the light of the research questions;
- A review of the empirical process;
- A description of the limitations of the study;
- Recommendations for further research and applications of the communities of practice concept in the domain of Citizenship education/Religion education;
- Final reflections by the researcher;
- The conclusion.

7.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

A key contention in this study is that if teachers are to be the facilitators or mediators of democratic Citizenship education, then teacher development should entail teacher-learning in contexts that develop their capacity to engage in the workings of a democratic society (2.3.2) (Westheimer 2008: 766). A further contention in this study is that teacher-learning in communities provides opportunities for transformative learning which includes critical reflection on prior learning

pertaining to democracy and diversity (Mezirow 2000: 8ff). Given South Africa's history, the possibility exists that the way in which teachers approach democratic Citizenship education may be influenced by their particular frames of reference (Mezirow 1991: 46, 2000: 16; *cf*. Roux 2007a: 471). This dissertation has, therefore, focused on investigating teacher-learning for Citizenship education/Religion education in communities of practice (Wenger 1998, 2006a, 2006b), one of various conceptualisations of professional learning communities (*cf*. 2.3). Mezirow's (1991, 2000, 2009) transformative learning theory was drawn upon for the insights it provides on how adults make sense of their lifeworld and how they could respond to and learn about diversity (Mezirow 1995: 5). These two theoretical strands are juxtaposed in this study for their contributions to maximising teacher-learning for Citizenship education/Religion education (*cf*. 3.1).

In Chapter 2 (2.3; 2.4), different perspectives on framing professional learning communities were presented which indicated different emphasises for teacher development by advocates of such learning communities. Wenger's theory of communities of practice was deemed to be the most effective based on the notion of "practice" intrinsic to the concept and operationalised as three dimensions, viz. a shared domain of interest, mutual engagement and a shared repertoire (Wenger 1998: 73, 2006a: 1). A perceived shortcoming in Wenger's theory however, identified in relation to this study with its emphasis on religious and cultural diversity, is located in the corporate emphasis which he ascribes to communities of practice (*cf*. Wenger 1998: 18, *Welcome to claims processing!*). Although Wenger alludes to diversity in communities of practice and states that "peace, happiness and harmony are not necessary properties of a community of practice" (ibid: 77), he does not deal explicitly with the tensions and complexities associated with religious, cultural and ethnic diversity in his exposition of communities of practice (ibid: 75). For this reason critical multicultural education was also drawn upon to add scope and depth to the conceptual framework of communities of practice. Critical multicultural education focuses on cultural and religious diversity in pluralist societies and the significance of developing thoughtful and active citizens who exhibit positive attitudes and behaviours towards people from different racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Banks 1997, 2002, 2004; Banks *et al* 2005; Nieto 2000; Gay 2002; Cochran-Smith 2004). In addition, various theoretical perspectives on deliberative or communicative democracy have informed this study for the inclusive slant that they give on plurality, values, citizenship and participation (*cf*. Gutmann 1996; Bohman 1996; Young 2000; Gould 1988).

Based on the findings from the action research phase of this research, it can be argued that in principle communities of practice provide an approach far more conducive to teacher-learning for democratic Citizenship education than the large-scale transmission-oriented approaches offered by INSET programmes. The community of practice approach hence provided a discursive space in which the extent of teacher knowledge for diversity could be determined and what teachers need to know for learning and teaching (Howard & Aleman 2008) about religious and cultural diversity (*cf*. Westheimer 2008; Zellermayer & Munthe 2007) (2.3; 2.4).

7.3 THE EMPIRICAL PROCESS

A mixed methods research process was utilised to seek answers to the research questions posed in this study (1.5). First a cross-sectional survey amongst 60 secondary schools across Gauteng was conducted, to be followed by a phase of participatory action research (PAR) with three teachers over a period of approximately eight months. The analysis and findings of the survey, which informed the PAR phase, have been presented in detail in Chapter 5. The PAR phase was designed to take place in six self-reflective cyclical stages (Figure 4.2), the analysis of which has been presented in Chapter 6 (6.4; 6.5, *cf*. Figure 6.1). The PAR phase was designed to reflect the workings of a community of practice for teacher-learning for democratic Citizenship education (4.4.2).

By positioning the community of practice in action research, I was able to investigate the transformative potential of the community of practice concept for teacher-learning for diversity. The data indicate that some kind of learning community is required for teachers to be able to critically reflect upon diversity-related issues that challenge their own beliefs and values (6.4.6, PAR Stage 5 Classroom observations; 6.4.7, PAR Stage 6, SSI6#Themes 3 & 4).

An evaluation of the PAR process as a strategy of inquiry for teacher development for democratic Citizenship education has been outlined in detail in Chapter 6 (6.5), but to reiterate at this point, the PAR phase was, *a process.* This meant that the length of time required by the PAR process allowed me to return frequently to the site to engage with the participants in a "shared practice" for Citizenship education/Religion education. Moreover, PAR afforded the participants opportunities to reflect on those areas of content knowledge that they had not acquired and the meaning and application of democratic values with which they were challenged in the contexts of their classrooms and broader communities.

Since the details of the PAR phase have been presented in Chapter 6, a finer analysis and interpretation of the findings of the empirical phase is presented in this chapter. This interpretation of the findings contributes to a question that arises in relation to the main research question concerning the knowledge base for Citizenship education/Religion education, viz. what do teachers need to know to enable them to teach Citizenship education/Religion education effectively (1.5; 2.2.3) (*cf.* Howard & Aleman 2008; Banks *et al* 2005)? This approach to "learning from" the data also attempts to address the sub-research questions:

- If Life Orientation teachers conceive Religion education as being a vehicle for promoting democratic values?
- If teacher participation in a community of practice is in fact effective for knowledge creation for diversity?

- If a community of practice approach to teacher development for Citizenship education/Religion education is at all effective for alerting teachers to local experiences of diversity as a resource for the domain of interest?

Hence, the next section provides a perspective on what teachers learning in a community of practice require for Citizenship education/Religion education "practice".

7.3.1 What the PAR stages reveal concerning the teacher's knowledge base for Citizenship education/Religion education

Engagement in the community of practice with teacher-participants throughout the PAR phase of the inquiry (viz. focus group discussions, observation and interviews) foregrounded the different categories of knowledge that teachers require to constitute a "practice" for Citizenship education/ Religion education. As Chiu (2003: 177) has noted, dealing with diversity requires the "interplay" (ibid) of different categories of knowledge to "shape new consciousness" (ibid) towards diversity, and hence one could argue, conceptions of citizenship education. Explanations of what these categories of knowledge entail are outlined below in terms of defining "practice" for Citizenship education/Religion education as "new consciousness". These categories of knowledge by no means exhaust the categories of knowledge proposed by various educationalists (Biggs 2003: 42; Park 2006: 87). Reasons for honing in on these particular categories of knowledge emanate from the data, examples of which have been included in relation to each one (*cf*. Wenger 1998: 214).

7.3.1.1 Propositional / transformative knowledge

The first type of knowledge that teachers require is "propositional knowledge". This includes content knowledge, facts, concepts and theories (Biggs 2003: 41). It is knowledge that accrues from research and its validity can be tested empirically. Banks (1997: 119) defines propositional knowledge as "mainstream academic knowledge", but adds that it requires a multicultural perspective to be relevant for democratic Citizenship education, making it what he (ibid) has referred to as "transformative knowledge" (*cf*. Nieto 2000: 305). According to Banks (1997: 119), when knowledge is transformative it takes human interests into account and is conducive to promoting social justice as a democratic principle and hence knowledge of various social and political relationships in society (*cf*. Cochran-Smith 2004: 65ff; Young 2000: 23).

Propositional knowledge for Citizenship education/Religion education refers to explicit content or subject knowledge derived from phenomenological, historical, sociological, political, philosophical and anthropological perspectives (Smart 1997; Jackson 1997; Chidester 1996, 2002a, 2003; Roux 2007a; Barnes 2009; Arthur *et al* 2010) on religions and beliefs practised in South Africa and in the world. Propositional knowledge moreover provides the reifications for constructing the domain of interest and shared repertoire (3.4.4) and enables teachers to participate in challenging the

negative or misinformed reifications about religions acquired through stereotyping or non-recognition of social groups (Young 1997: 386; Chiu 2003: 177). A transformative perspective on propositional knowledge foregrounds the human right to freedom of religion or belief, pays special attention to what this constitutional right means for minority religious groups, and addresses local experiences of religions and worldviews (3.4.4.5) (Banks 1997: 119; Gutmann 1996: 157; Young 2000: 53; *cf*. Bloom 1996: 1ff).

The following examples from the data, presented in Table 7.1, support the need for this category of knowledge for the domain of interest:

Table 7.1: Propositional knowledge for Citizenship education/Religion education

Categories of knowledge: as propositional knowledge	**Examples from the data**
Knowledge about religions	• References were made in the teachers' lessons to Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Judaism. In relation to Islam, Buddhism and Roman Catholicism either teachers or learners made inaccurate statements which could have been avoided had the teacher's knowledge been more academic than commonsense. For example: reference was made to "*Maradan"* instead of Ramadan, and "*Buddahists"* instead of Buddhists [Tlaletso: Stage 5 TLAOBS 1.3].
History of religions, including the African Independent Churches in South Africa.	• Knowing the origins and historical development of religions in South Africa, including new churches and new religious movements, viz. the African Independent Churches, Wicca and by extension, the history of Rastafari in South Africa. Examples: At least two of the teachers mentioned African Independent Churches including the Zionist Christian Church, small urban Zionist groups, the International Pentecostal Holiness Church and the Church of the Nazarites.
Denominational differences in Christianity (diversity within Christianity)	• Knowing the historical reasons for the differences between Roman Catholicism and the Protestant churches. • Protestant Churches in South Africa. Example: PAR Stage 5 Observations Extract 2 (TLAOBS 1.2) Learner asks Teacher T: *You know I wanted to ask you something? Is there a difference between Christians and Catholics*?
African Traditional Religions	• Knowledge of African traditional religions (culture and religion) [Phumzile FG2#8] (*cf.* Mndende 1998a, 1998b; Kwenda *et al* 1997).
Diversity within religions	• Frequent references were made to diversity within religions, Christianity and Islam, in particular.
Terms or concepts related to religion and diverse religions and beliefs	• Knowing concepts such as "religion" and "culture", the differences between these concepts and the overlap between them [Phumzile FG2#8] • Terms used as labels and the implications for creating stereotypes. Example: "witches".

Knowledge of minority religious groups (and the rights implications)	• Inaccurate references made to groups that teachers did not know much about, viz. Wicca and the Latter Day Saints (as "Mormons"). • No knowledge of less known religious groups and movements such as the Bahai [PAR Stage 5, TLAOBS 1.4]
Knowledge of the place of religion in public policy, and as constitutional right.	Knowing the relationship between Religion education and constitutional rights. Example: Tlaletso: "they have to understand that it's their right to have those religions that they want… "[FG2#8].
Knowledge of values Knowledge of particular human rights	• Personal, national and democratic values and what these mean in relation to conceptualising democratic Citizenship education and for developing appropriate pedagogy (*cf*. functioning knowledge and relational knowledge below; references to tolerance and the open classroom) (1.9). • Rights of gay and lesbian learners particularly in relation to religious beliefs and values [Stage 5 TLAOBS 1.5] *[cf*. Relational knowledge below]. • Rights of individuals to convert from one religion to another: Example: [Phumzile] the boy who converted from the ZCC to Islam (PAR Stage 5 Observations (PHUOBS.2.7). Rochelle: the boy who converted to Islam as a way out of poverty. (SSI6#Theme 5).

7.3.1.2 Functioning knowledge

The second knowledge type that teachers need for Citizenship education/Religion education is the type of knowledge that Biggs (2003: 42) refers to as "functioning knowledge". This kind of knowledge is related to devising appropriate pedagogical strategies informed by propositional knowledge (ibid). This category of knowledge is necessary so that the teacher knows how and when to respond to different situations from an informed position. In the context of Citizenship education/Religion education, functioning knowledge enables teachers to represent religions accurately in the classroom (*cf*. Propositional knowledge, 7.3.1.1). It is also that kind of knowledge that enables teachers to challenge the reifications of religious traditions and practices and stereotypical images of devotees or adherents of religions or even of religions themselves as expressed in the classroom and by parents. Functioning knowledge in relation to Citizenship education is that kind of knowledge that enables teachers to set up learning to promote the idea of the democratic classroom, including taking deliberate and active steps to provide inter-religious and inter-cultural learning opportunities (Ipgrave 2001; Le Roux & Möller 2002: 185; Weisse 2003; Ferguson & Roux 2003a; Fancourt 2007: 54; Roux 2007b; Baumfield 2010: 89; Stern 2010).

Some references to the need for functioning knowledge from the data are included in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2: Functioning knowledge for Citizenship education/Religion education

Category of functioning knowledge	**Examples from the data**
Knowing how to manage the multifacetedness of diversity	• Knowing how to address diversity; dealing with religious differences [Tlaletso FG2#9]; • Mediation of contentious or sensitive issues. Examples: Religion and homosexuality [Stage 5, TLAOBS 1.4, 1.5]; Resolving conflict situations, viz. Tlaletso FG 4; reference to the overt expressions of differences in practice between Reformed Churches and Charismatic churches in a school context [SSI#3 Tlaletso] Tlaletso's response to her learners' claims that they are witches Response: *Why do you call yourself a witch*? "You know what I do most of the time, they sometimes want to ask me some questions like they heard somebody saying, "Ma'am Roman Catholic is a cult"' Response: "Where did you get that from"?

The responses indicate that teachers need the knowledge and skill to be able to address misconceptions and inaccuracies pertaining to religious and cultural diversity expressed by learners. It also indicates the sophistication of the knowledge base and pedagogical skilfulness required to turn potentially destructive or harmful comments from learners into meaningful learning experiences to ensure that more informed perspectives result from the interactions.

7.3.1.3 Interpretive knowledge

The third type of knowledge that teachers require is "interpretive knowledge", which is that type of knowledge that creates an understanding of texts, persons, events and situations (Park 2006: 85; Slattery 2006: 115; *cf*. Roux 2007a). Interpretive knowledge learned with propositional knowledge contributes to deep learning and should assist teachers to work out solutions to the problems of diversity that may emerge in their particular contexts (Biggs 2003: 9) (*cf*. 7.3.1.1, Propositional knowledge).

Table 7.3: Examples of Interpretive knowledge from the data

[SSI6#5] Phumzile	I think it's the brand of Christianity the brand in the context of an African culture… learners with a different cultural background will offer the same Christianity in a different context.
[SSI6#5] Tlaletso	Yes Ma'am the ZCC people they are jumping. Where? Where in the Bible does it say we must jump"?

Interpretive knowledge is located in the teacher's ability to deconstruct misconceptions or negative stereotypes that manifest in the classroom (Slattery 2006: 3; *cf*. Roux 2007a: 472) (2.2.1).

7.3.1.4 Relational knowledge

Relational knowledge (Park 2006: 86) is the fourth type of knowledge found to be relevant for teacher development in this study. It is the type of knowledge that is associated with participatory action research, but is also the category of knowledge that, in my view as the researcher, members of a community of practice require to sustain the community concept. Relational knowledge has "the potential for bringing people together in empathy and making it possible for them to know one another affectively as well as cognitively" (ibid). Affectivity in knowing others refers to how we come to know others in human ways, as friends, treating one another with care, respect, admiration and trust (Park 2006: 87; *cf*. Waghid 2004, 2009; Nieto 2000: 315; Nussbaum 1997: 63). This includes, as Young (2000: 57) suggests, acknowledging "one another in their particularity".

In the PAR context Chiu (2003: 175) draws attention to the importance of "knowing through encounter" or "experiential knowing". This kind of knowing is potentially developed through participation in critical dialogue in focus groups (ibid: 176). By extension, in the community of practice, the mentor or "provocateur" (the researcher in this case), encouraged the participants to critically reflect on their own narratives and to identify their own areas of shortcoming in order to transform them (*cf.* 6.4.7.3, SSI6#Themes 2, 3 & 4). It seems that the process was not based entirely on the rational, but influenced by compassion and the personal interest of the teachers in the well-being of their learners (*cf.* the reference to "affective knowing" in Taylor 2009: 10). This situation bears on "holistic orientation" as one of the components of fostering transformative learning as was discussed in Chapter 3 (3.2.3.4 (iv)).

In the context of this research, the need for relational knowledge emerged in the data as presented in Table 7.4 below. These examples draw attention in addition to the meaning of reflective teaching in the Citizenship education/Religion education domain of interest. Reflective teaching in this context requires that teachers become more conscious of their assumptions and those of their learners about "the other" and are able to reorganise existing knowledge to be more accommodating of the multiple viewpoints and contexts of their learners (Brookfield 1995: 7; Nieto 2000: 313; *cf*. Perkins 1992: 93).

Relational knowledge also includes knowledge of how to interact "with" difference. It is as Park (2006: 88) suggests, "knowledge in relationship", which in this sense does not consist of facts, but "resides in the act of relating and shows itself in words, expressions, actions and other forms of doing relationships. In relationship, we know with feeling, and the knowing is in the feeling" (ibid).

From the perspective of this research however, it can be argued that the acquisition of affective and relational knowing (Taylor 2009: 10) by teachers requires some form of intervention or mediation in teacher development programmes to foster transformative learning (*cf*. 6.4.6; 6.4.7).

Table 7.4: Examples of relational knowledge from the data

	Examples from the data
[FG2, 4] **Tlaletso** **Stage 5 TLAOBS 1.4**	• Know how to teach for tolerance so as not to discriminate; • Know what tolerance means; and • How to handle the dilemmas associated with "tolerance" and inclusivity. • Tlaletso's change of attitude towards homosexuality was directly influenced by her learner's disclosing her sexual orientation during a class discussion.
FG 2, 3 **SSI6#Theme 4**	• Phumzile was made alert to the relationship between religion and culture in his community; the influences of African tradition on the Christianity of the Independent Churches; the role of the ancestors in the everyday lives of people. • Phumzile was conscious of the beliefs and practices of members of his community in some ways, but in others not (*cf*. Park 2006: 89), viz. the boy who converted to Islam.
SSI6#Theme 5	• Rochelle's heightened awareness of poverty as difference amongst the learners in her classes; her awareness of the relationship between poverty and conversions to Islam.

7.4 CRITIQUE OF THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE APPROACH FOR THIS STUDY

A critical review of the communities of practice concept was presented in Chapter 3.5, derived from the perspectives of various educationalists. Whilst the argument in this dissertation is weighted on the side of the value of communities of practice for teacher-learning for Citizenship education/Religion education, there are, however, aspects of the community of practice concept that remain unresolved in this study. A brief discussion of these aspects follows based on the findings in the QUAL data obtained during the PAR phase.

First, the notion of "practice", whilst generically well developed in Wenger's theory (1998: 43, 42), does not provide the specifics required for the contentiousness associated with learning and teaching a knowledge field such as democratic Citizenship education, even though he does draw attention to the importance of heterogeneity in communities of practice (ibid: 77) (3.5.2). Hence, the concepts "learning in practice" and "learning through participation" need to be explored more specifically for what they mean in relation to developing teacher-capacity for including the principles of democracy in Life Orientation, as well as to deal with the contentious issues that are

likely to arise in relation to religious diversity (*cf.* Howard & Aleman 2008: 166; Robertson 2008: 28; Westheimer 2008: 773).

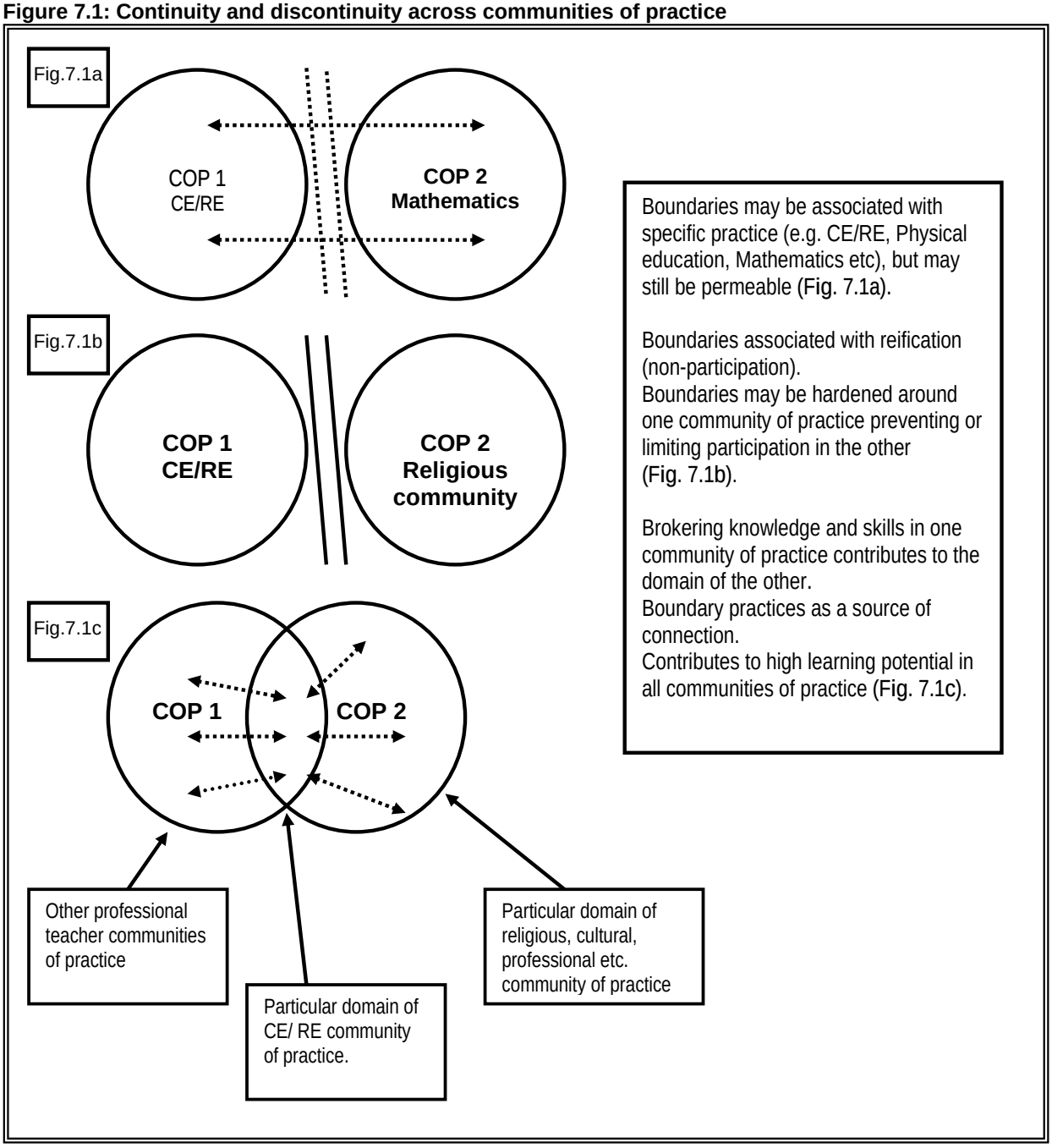
Second, while various educationalists propose that learning together in a community of practice potentially counters the "ceiling effect" (*cf.* Fullan 2002: 18) of teachers learning on their own (*cf.* 2.2, iv), the shift in perspective to "horizontal" learning (Wenger 2006b: 28) raises questions as to who serves as "catalysts" for learning to ensure that knowledge does not become "frozen" or static (Hoban 2002: 55), undermining the purpose of communities of practice as "instruments of generative knowledge" and practice (Wenger 1998: 214; Wenger *et al* 2002: 141). From a researcher's perspective, the contents of the participants' responses in the focus groups and semi-structured interviews indicated the value of learning together, but the responses also indicated that there is a need for effective mentors or "knowledgeable others" (Dowson 2007: 93) (*cf*. Hoban 2002: 42; Jewson 2007: 69) who ensure that new ideas and innovations are continuously introduced to maintain a dynamic in relation to constructing the domain of interest. Moreover, in developing teacher capacity for diversity, knowledgeable others are needed to ensure that religions, cultures and secular worldviews are represented fairly and that the "critical consciousness" associated with transformative learning is maintained (Howard & Aleman 2008: 165; Mezirow 2009: 21; Mezirow in Dirkx & Mezirow 2006: 124).

Constant stimulation of the practice could come from mentorship inside of the community and from the injection of new ideas from outsiders. Mentors are both "facilitators and provocateurs" (Mandell & Herman 2009: 79; Mezirow 1997: 11). In the context of learning for democracy and diversity the mentor or provocateur needs to ensure that equality, mutuality and reciprocity drive the activities so that members do not fall prey to unequal distributions of power (*cf*. 3.2.3.5; 3.5.5) (Wenger *et al* 2002: 142). This person, or even persons, may be university educationalists (*cf.* Cochran-Smith's inquiry communities, 2004:13), subject specialists, well-informed subject advisors or even knowledgeable peers who have a personal interest in democratic citizenship, religion and religious diversity and secular worldviews (*cf*. Chapter 5, Table 5.8a, Respondent 31). Whoever these provocateurs or mentors are, they should be able to provide intellectual leadership and guidance with regard to the internal dynamics in the community of practice in the ways suggested above.

7.4.1 Problems and possibilities with the community of practice concept for Citizenship education/Religion education

At this point an aspect of participation referred to in Chapter 3.4.5.3 is returned to, viz. identity as multi-membership, which refers to a person's participation in different communities of practice. In Chapter 3 it was pointed out that people will participate and develop their identities in different ways in different communities of practice. Discontinuity and continuity are illustrated in Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1: Continuity and discontinuity across communities of practice



Discontinuity in a practice may occur for at least two reasons, one of which is particularly significant in defining a practice for Citizenship education/Religion education with the focus on diversity. One reason for discontinuity could, according to Wenger (1998: 103), be associated merely with the members, who over time have created their own discontinuities as a result of non-participation (Fig. 7.1b). Another reason for discontinuity, however, is related to "practice" becoming the source (or reification) of its own boundary. In this sense, boundaries are potentially areas of trouble, when discontinuities are associated with ignorance, misunderstanding or mistrust of the practices of others. Therefore, when concepts become reified boundary markers they may

limit or even prohibit full participation in a particular community of practice. In these situations, the boundary markers may even ensure separation of insiders (participants) of the community from outsiders (non-participants) (Fig. 7.1b) (*cf.* Wenger 1998: 114; Wenger *et al* 2002: 143). In the light of these kinds of situations, the duality of participation and reification (*cf*. 3.4.3; 3.5.5) acts as a source of "social discontinuity" (Fig. 7.1b) (ibid: 104).

However, the participation and reification associated with particular practices may also become the sources of *connection* that create continuities across boundaries between communities of practice (Wenger 1998: 104, 113) (Fig. 7.1a, c). This happens when "products of reification" (ibid: 105) are introduced into different practices, an occurrence that represents the ideal situation for multi-membership in communities of practice. People could therefore belong to different communities which "talk" to one another, depending on whether or not they are willing to create connections across the practices in which they participate (Fig. 7.1a, c) (ibid: 105). *Brokering* is the term used by Wenger (1998: 109) to refer to the type of connection that introduces elements of one practice to another. It is also involves processes of alignment between *perspectives* across communities of practice, as elements of one practice are successfully introduced into another (Fig. 7.1a, c).

Both Figures 7.1a and 7.1c represent situations of multi-membership (*cf*. 3.4.5.3). Figure 7.1a represents membership in distinctly different practices, with boundary markers that give the communities their particular identities. These boundary markers are perceived as being permeable, since participation does neither inhibit nor prohibit participation in the other. Learning in one contributes towards learning in the other.

Figure 7.1c represents multi-membership in different practices in which brokering becomes normative. In relation to Life Orientation, it is inevitable that teachers will belong to numerous communities of practice, given the diverse focus areas that comprise the learning area/subject (*cf*. 1.3; Fig. 7.1a). The diagram shows directions of interactions between multiple communities of practice (Wenger 1998: 114). The status and identities of teachers in communities of practice (*cf*. 3.4.5.1, 3.4.5.2) will influence the extent and quality of participation in relation to the different practices of which they are a part, viz. as full participants or as peripheral members. The nature of one's participation is likely to influence brokering. Wenger (1998: 109) points out that the process of brokering is complex but necessary and advantageous to ensuring the ongoing life of communities. The situation represented in Figure 7.1c may result in what Wenger has referred to as "overlapping" (ibid: 114). Overlapping occurs when one type of practice-based connection provides a direct and sustained overlap with two or more different practices (Wenger 1998: 115). Overlapping as a result of successful brokering has high learning potential (Wenger 2006b: 18) in that novel combinations, innovative and creative solutions to diversity-related issues may be sought.

In relation to teacher-learning for diversity in a community of practice, the ideal situation is provided by those teachers who are able to move from one practice to another, because they recognise that certain activities can be aligned across the practices. The teacher who is a member of both a Citizenship education community of practice and a religious community may contribute effectively to engagement in both, as well as in the overlap (Fig. 7.1c). For example Tlaletso drew heavily on her knowledge of Christian denominations including various expressions of African Christianity to augment discussions on religious diversity in South Africa in her Citizenship education classes (*cf*. 6.4.6.4, PAR Stage 5, TLAOBS1.2). Her awareness of the need to encourage tolerance of difference, gained from her role as a pastor in the broader church community, spills over into her role as teacher in a multi-cultural school (*cf*. 3.4.5.3). The identity in one community of practice is hence an asset and contributes to the person's level of participation in the practice of another.

In relation to the situation represented by Figure 7.1b, it is equally possible that a teacher may opt for non-participation in a Citizenship education community of practice as a result of complete immersion and identification in a religious community. The hardening of the boundaries as a result of exclusivist perspectives towards beliefs, practices or traditions has negative implications for the domain of interest and the shared repertoire (*cf*. Chapter 5, SQ 14, Respondent 34).

The reason for emphasising this aspect of the community of practice concept is related to examples in the data which indicate how teachers are able to broker across communities of practice and the repercussions if they are not able to identify the possibilities associated with overlapping (PAR Stage 6, SSI6#Theme 2, 3 & 4). Overlapping does not suggest that the teacher needs to rescind his/her social identity (religious or cultural) related to one community of practice for the sake of participating in another. Rather, multiple-membership is a source of innovation for democratic Citizenship education, the possibilities of which create opportunities for negotiation in the practice of the community of practice (*cf*. 7.3.1; 7.4.3).

7.4.2 Limitations of the study

The first of the perceived limitations of this study is associated with the size of the community of practice in the PAR phase. Although it was noted in Chapter 4.4.3 that significant action research may be small in scope (Reason & Bradbury 2006: xxii), the active participation of more teachers from different religious backgrounds would have contributed towards enriching the engagement in the community of practice, this in spite of Wolcott's (1994: 180) view regarding the value of having fewer cases in qualitative research. The contributions of teachers from other ethnic and religious groups in the town (the site of the research) would have made the group more diverse and broadened the scope of contributions to the domain of interest.

Second, with regard to the observation phase in PAR Stage 5, the limited time allowed in schools for the qualitative phase meant that there had not been adequate time for a further cycle of follow-up in the classroom, viz. to work together on appropriate pedagogy in response to some of the sensitive issues that had arisen in the lessons themselves and that had been expressed in the focus groups. Third, in the light of the aforementioned observation, the project could also have benefited from investigating appropriate pedagogy for teaching for diversity in the three different social contexts in which the schools are situated.

Fourth, the project would have benefited from exploring the possibilities of how teachers could contribute to constructing the knowledge base or domain of interest in the community of practice. The data that the empirical study has produced indicate the availability of rich sources of "situated knowledge" for this community, viz. Christian denominations, such as those in the Reformed tradition, Islam, African traditional religions and the Independent Churches; but not excluding Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism and the many other religions and belief orientations in other parts of South Africa.

Fifth, the site of the study was confined to three schools in a single district in Gauteng, which limited the contributions to the domain of interest. Further applications of the community of practice concept in other districts in Gauteng and the other provinces in South Africa would contribute significantly towards understanding the kinds of knowledge (propositional and functional) that teachers need to advance teacher development for Citizenship education/Religion education.

Lastly, as the researcher, I fulfilled the role of the "knowledgeable other" or "empathetic provocateur" in this study. The possibility of the presence of such a "provocateur" or "provocateurs" who will continue to advance the idea of a shared practice for democratic Citizenship education in every community of practice remains unresolved in this study. The three participants indicated in the semi-structured interviews that they were enthusiastic about sustaining the community of practice concept with Life Orientation colleagues in their respective schools. However, if one takes the types of knowledge that teachers of Citizenship education/Religion education require, as outlined in Chapters 3 (3.4.4.1) and 7 (7.3.1), an extended period of time is needed to ensure effective teacher-learning and hence the development of more mentors in this field.

Based on these limitations, recommendations for further research in this area will be proposed in the next section.

7.4.3 Recommendations for further research

The qualitative phase of this study provided the evidence of the value of teacher professional learning communities for teacher development for Citizenship education/Religion education. However, since this study was limited to three schools in one district, although very different, the full extent of teacher-learning about religious and cultural diversity and the influences of teachers' frames of reference on how diversity is approached in the classroom could not be explored in depth. Hence, the community of practice concept as I have conceptualised it for democratic Citizenship education (*cf*. Chapter 3.4.3 ff) will benefit from replications in other contexts. Further investigation is strongly recommended for developing the notion of "practice" for Citizenship education/Religion education in different contexts and regions in South Africa, viz. urban mono-religious; urban religiously diverse; and rural areas (*inter alia*) where traditional beliefs and African churches may be experienced differently than in suburban areas in towns and cities. Also significant for investigation in relation to developing the domain of interest are the influences of Islam, Judaism and Hinduism in various urban areas, and further investigation into the syncretism of Christianity and African Traditional Religions as particular to the South African context.

A further recommendation is related to investigating teachers working closely together as a community of practice to construct a knowledge base that reflects the richness of religious history and culture as domain of interest in areas or regions where the teachers particular schools are situated. Encouraging creativity amongst teachers to develop the tools and artefacts that shape the repertoire of a "practice" for democracy and diversity stands in stark contrast to the "scripted" and therefore reified versions of Citizenship education and references to topics of religious and cultural diversity passed on in textbooks or in the kinds of INSET programmes spearheaded by provincial Departments of Education.

With this point in mind yet a further recommendation is related to the community of practice concept specifically to engage teachers in learning what democracy means, the workings of a democracy in the deliberative and participatory sense and dialogue and reflection as the critical skills and values necessary for peaceful co-existence (*cf*. Amor 2001; Van Doorn-Harder 2007; Banks 1997; Enslin *et al* 2001). This recommendation is linked to the possibilities and problems of teachers' multi-membership in communities of practice (7.4.1). A valuable study may focus specifically on the teacher and how he/she develops the critical consciousness required to broker and hence to conceptualise the connection possibilities between for example, religious (viz. church, mosque, temple etc) communities of practice and professional communities of practice (viz. teachers of Citizenship education). This recommendation suggests exploring the communities of practice concept in school neighbourhoods, viz. drawing teachers, parents and learners together into a community of practice to generate knowledge of the religious and cultural differences in the neighbourhood with the purpose of instigating inter-religious, inter-ideological

and cross-cultural dialogue, similar to the work conducted by Ipgrave & McKenna (2007: 215), Zonne (2007: 71) and Miller (2009: 130), for example.

The establishment of communities of practice as loci for teacher-learning and development in relation to specific kinds of "practice" pertaining to democracy is worth propagating. A focus on human rights in education, deeper investigations into the meaning of teaching for tolerance (*cf*. FG2#9), and understanding the nature of the democratic classroom or what it means to teach for social justice are areas that would benefit from a community of practice approach to teacher development (*cf*. Miller, Beliveau, DeStigter, Kirkland & Rice 2008; Stradling & Rowe 2009).

In relation to the last point discussed as a limitation of the study (7.4.2), the "workability" of Wenger's (2006b: 28) emphasis on horizontal learning in a community of practice may be a worthwhile area of research, contributing to a maximal interpretation of Citizenship education for the South African context (1.9.1; 1.9.2) (*cf*. McLaughlin 1992; Ramphele 2010).

7.5 FINAL RESEARCHER REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

This research project was made possible because of the co-operation of various officials of one district in the Gauteng Department of Education who assisted me in locating a site for the research and in identifying participants. However, it was the willingness and dedication of three teachers of Life Orientation in the district that ultimately made this research possible. The PAR and ethnographic approach to the research meant that my presence was always obvious to the participants. The danger always existed that the lines between researcher and participants would be blurred as a result, but this did not happen, even though the participants were always affectionate towards me (*cf*. Young 2000: 57, 58).

Of real interest to me as researcher was that I realized that the assumptions that I had held at the start of the project were soon challenged. I anticipated that the participant teachers would be opposed to teaching Religion education and that much of the "research" time would be spent convincing them of its value in the Citizenship education focus area of Life Orientation. However, it was interesting to note that all three had a genuine interest in incorporating religion and religious diversity into Life Orientation. This interest and willingness confirmed what had been established in the sample of teachers in the survey questionnaire (*cf*. Chapter 5, SQ 10, 11, 13). Two of the teacher-participants in the PAR were deeply committed to their Christian faith, yet could stand back most of the time to include religious diversity in their classrooms. The challenges in relation to transformative learning theory were associated with what teachers understood by the values of tolerance, inclusivity, openness, mutuality and reciprocity and how the teachers responded to challenging diversity-related issues in the "real world" of their schools and classrooms.

The participants' personal narratives told in the focus groups, in informal conversations and in the semi-structured interviews provided me with rich data for this report. The idea of situated learning drew attention to the communities as rich resources of social, religious and cultural history that need to be tapped into by teachers and their learners. I have not been able to use all of the data that I obtained for this research, since not all were relevant to answering the research questions, however, personal narratives and "oral histories" as ways to explore religious and cultural diversity are also recommended as areas for further research (*cf*. Miller *et al* 2008).

7.6 IN CONCLUSION

I have presented teacher development initiatives for Citizenship education in this dissertation as having received insufficient attention in DoE-initiated teacher development programmes. At the time of writing this report, Life Orientation and therewith Social development in the RNCS (DoE 2002) as the forerunner to Citizenship education in the NCS (FET) (DoE 2003a) is already being phased out in the primary schools, and Religion Studies is being phased in again, named as a separate subject in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, Life Orientation (CAPS) (DoE 2010). The FET Life Orientation CAPS document (DoE 2010: 7) replaces Citizenship education with *Social and environmental responsibility* and *Democracy and human rights*. The focus on Religion Education, although still limited, remains as it is in the amended documents. Conceptualising the two subject areas together, viz. Citizenship education and Religion education, although not named as such in the amended Life Orientation curriculum remains nevertheless as an area of local and international interest and concern (*cf*. Arthur *et al* 2010; Miedema & Bertram-Troost 2008; Jackson 2007).

This study has recognised the value of Religion education as an aspect of democratic Citizenship education in the FET school curriculum. It has consequently attempted to draw attention to how teacher development is conceptualised for democracy in education. Having teachers work collaboratively with colleagues in communities of practice in a closer relationship with the knowledge of living religions and cultures in school communities seems to be a more viable option than having teachers receive fixed or reified bodies of knowledge for transmission in the classroom from facilitators of large-scale INSET programmes. The reason for taking this stance is to emphasise the social justice element in the recognition of all religious and cultural groups whose presence usually escapes the attention of curriculum designers, programme facilitators and hence the attention of teachers who could draw on these as valuable contributions to diversity. The challenge remains as to how teachers will approach religious diversity as integral to democratic citizenship education, negotiate the boundaries of one community of practice in relation to another, and ultimately engage in a practice that is truly worthwhile for generating a domain of interest that recognises diversity as a "human hallmark".

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

COMMUNICATION WITH GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[NOTE: The original title of the study was *Situated learning as a teacher development option for religion education in the Life Orientation curriculum*. The title was changed to the present one as the research unfolded – hence the different title in the letters to the Department of Education]

APPENDIX Ia

27 St Andrews Rd.
Parktown.
Johannesburg.
2193.
26th July 2007.

Gauteng Department of Education
Policy Coordination Directorate
Attention Mr. Shadrack Phele
cc. Ms. Nomvula Ubisi

Dear Mr Phele

Request to conduct research in secondary schools in Gauteng: PhD study.

I am a registered PhD student at Stellenbosch University and employed as a lecturer in Life Orientation: Religion studies (including human rights and values) in the Wits School of Education, Parktown, Johannesburg.

I hereby request permission from the Gauteng Education Department to conduct my research in a sample of secondary schools in Gauteng. Please find attached the completed GDE research request form (Attachment 2) as well as a copy of my research proposal (Attachment 3).

The purpose and nature of my study has been outlined in the research proposal.
However, by way of summary, I anticipate conducting my research using two methods, a cross sectional survey and a stage of participatory action research (PAR). I wish to conduct the survey in mid-August (2007), as a result I would appreciate it if permission for this stage could be granted in principle immediately. I accept that permission for the PAR stage will be granted according to the stipulated time in the GDE research briefing document.

I have also attached the cross sectional survey questionnaire (Attachment 4). I have not as yet devised the interview guide that I will use when interviewing participating educators as this guide can only be designed once I have the data from the survey questionnaire. I will be able to send this guide once I have analysed the survey. Also, I have not as yet identified the schools for participation in either the survey or the action research. I will submit this list to you in the next week.

I trust that you will look upon my application favourably. Should there be any other documents or information that you require from me as a matter of urgency, I can be contacted either by email or telephone (see below).

The "*Declaration by researcher*" page with my original signature will be faxed.

Yours sincerely

René Ferguson

Tel
Cellular:
Email:

For Official Use	
Ref. No.	

APPENDIX Ib

GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

RESEARCH REQUEST FORM

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN INSTITUTIONS AND/OR OFFICES OF THE GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

1. PARTICULARS OF THE RESEARCHER

1.1	**Details of the Researcher**
Surname and Initials:	*Ferguson, R*
First Name/s:	*René*
Title (Prof / Dr / Mr / Mrs / Ms):	*Mrs.*
Student Number (if relevant):	
ID Number:	
Gender (Male/Female):	*Female*

1.2	**Private Contact Details**
Home Address	***Postal Address (if different)***
Postal Code:	***Postal Code:***

2. PURPOSE & DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

2.1	**Purpose of the Research (Place cross where appropriate)**
Undergraduate Study – Self	
Postgraduate Study – Self	**X**
Post-Doctoral Study	
Private Company/Agency – Commissioned by Provincial and/or National Government Department/s	
Private Research by Independent Researcher	
Non-Governmental Organisation	
National Department of Education Commissioned Study	
Commissions and Committees	
Independent Research Agency	
Statutory Research Agency	
Independent Study by Higher Education Institution	

2.2	**If Post-Graduate Study – Please indicate by placing a "X" in the appropriate column**	
Honours	***Masters***	***Doctorate***
		X

2.3	**Full title of Thesis / Dissertation / Research Project**
Situated learning as a teacher development option for religion education in the	
Life Orientation curriculum.	

2.4	**Value of the Research to Education (Attach Research Proposal)**
See research proposal: Attachment (2)	

2.5	**Student and Postgraduate Enrolment Particulars (if applicable)**

Name of institution where enrolled:	*Stellenbosch University*
Degree / Qualification:	*PhD.*
Faculty:	*Education*
Department:	*Curriculum Study*
Name of Supervisor / Promoter:	*Prof. CD Roux*

2.6	**Employer (where applicable)**
Name of Organisation/School:	*Wits School of Education*
Position in Organisation:	*Principal Tutor (Life Orientation)*
Head of Organisation:	*Prof. Mary Metcalfe*
Street Address:	*27 St. Andrews Rd*
	Parktown
Postal Code:	*2193*
Telephone Number (Code + Ext):	
Fax Number:	
E-mail:	*Rene.Ferguson@wits.ac.za*

2.7	**PERSAL Number (where applicable)**

3. PROPOSED RESEARCH METHOD/S

(Please indicate by placing a cross in the appropriate block whether the following modes would be adopted)

3.1 ***Questionnaire/s (If Yes, supply copies of each to be used)***

YES	**X**	**NO**	

3.2 ***Interview/s (If Yes, provide copies of each schedule)***

YES	**X**	**NO**	

3.3 ***Use of official documents***

YES	X	NO	
If Yes, please specify the document/s:			
National policy on religion and education (2003)			

3.4 ***Workshop/s / Group Discussions. (If Yes, Supply details)***

YES	X	NO	
Anticipate workshops twice a month. Feedback by teachers			
and input by researcher.			

3.5 ***Standardised Tests (e.g. Psychometric Tests)***

YES		NO	X
If Yes, please specify the test/s to be used and provide a copy/ies			

4. RESEARCH PROCESSES

4.1 ***Types of Institutions.*** **(Please indicate by placing a cross alongside all types of institutions to be researched).**

INSTITUTIONS	Mark with "X" here
Primary Schools	
Secondary Schools	**X**
Technical Schools	
ABET Centres	
ECD Sites	
LSEN Schools	
Further Education & Training Institutions	
Other	

4.2 ***Number of institution/s involved in the study.*** **(Kindly place a sum and the total in the spaces provided).**

Type of Institution	**Total**
Primary Schools	
Secondary Schools	**60 (survey) 2 PAR**
Technical Schools	
ABET Centres	
ECD Sites	
LSEN Schools	
Further Education & Training Institutions	
Other	
GRAND TOTAL	**60 (includes 2 PAR)**

4.3 ***Name/s of institutions to be researched.*** **(Please complete on a separate sheet and append if space is deemed insufficient).**

Name/s of Institution/s
To be determined.

4.4 ***District/s where the study is to be conducted.*** **(Please mark with an "X").**

District	
Johannesburg East	**X**
Johannesburg South	**X**
Johannesburg West	**X**
Johannesburg North	**X**
Gauteng North	**X**
Gauteng West	**X**
Tshwane North	
Tshwane South	
Ekhuruleni East	**X**

District	
Ekhuruleni West	**X**
Sedibeng East	**X**
Sedibeng West	**X**

If Head Office/s (Please indicate Directorate/s)

<u>NOTE</u>:

If you have not as yet identified your sample/s, a list of the names and addresses of all the institutions and districts under the jurisdiction of the GDE is available from the department at a small fee.

4.5 Number of learners to be involved per school. *(Please indicate the number by gender).*

Grade	**1**		**2**		**3**		**4**		**5**		**6**	
Gender	***B***	***G***	***B***	***G***	***B***	***G***	***B***	***G***	***B***	***G***	***B***	***G***
Number												

Grade	**7**		**8**		**9**		**10**		**11**		**12**	
Gender	***B***	***G***	***B***	***G***	***B***	***G***	***B***	***G***	***B***	***G***	***B***	***G***
Number												

4.6 Number of educators/officials involved in the study. *(Please indicate the number in the relevant column).*

Type of staff	*Educators*	*HODs*	*Deputy Principals*	*Principal*	*Lecturers*	*Office Based Officials*
Number	***Survey ± 60 PAR ± 12***	***May be included in 12***				

4.7 Are the participants to be involved in groups or individually? *Please mark with an "X".*

Participation	
Groups	**X**
Individually	**X**

4.8 Average period of time each participant will be involved in the test or any other research activity *(Please indicate time in minutes)*

Participant/s	**Activity**	**Time**
In cross sectional survey	Survey questionnaire	**±** *20 minutes*
12 Lo Teachers	PAR (see proposal for details)	3-4 months

4.9 Time of day that you propose to conduct your research. *Please mark with an "X".*

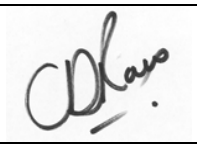
School Hours	*During Break*	*After School Hours*
X (observation)		***X (workshops)***

4.10 School term/s during which the research would be undertaken. *Please mark with an "X".*

First Term	*Second Term*	*Third Term*

X (2008)		***X (2007)***

DECLARATION BY THE RESEARCHER	
1. **I declare that all statements made by myself in this application are true and accurate.** ***2.*** **I have read and fully understand all the conditions associated with the granting of approval to conduct research within the GDE, as outlined in the GDE Research Briefing Document, and undertake to abide by them.** ***3.*** **Should I fail to adhere to any of the approval conditions set out by the GDE, I would be in breach of the agreement reached with the organisation, and all privileges associated with the granting of approval to conduct research, would fall away.**	
Signature:	
Date:	***26th July 2007***

DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR / PROMOTER / LECTURER	
I declare that: - **1. The applicant is enrolled at the institution / employed by the organisation to which the undersigned is attached.** **2. The overall research processes meet the criteria of:** • **Educational Accountability** • **Proper Research Design** • **Sensitivity towards Participants** • **Correct Content and Terminology** • **Acceptable Grammar** • **Absence of Non-essential / Superfluous items**	
Surname:	***Roux***
First Name/s:	***Cornelia Delina***
Institution / Organisation:	***Stellenbosch University***
Faculty:	***Education***
Department:	***Curriculum Studies***
Telephone:	
Fax:	
Cell:	
E-mail:	
Signature:	
Date:	***25 July 2007***

N.B. This form (and all other relevant documentation where available) may be completed and forwarded electronically to Ebrahim Farista (ebrahimf@gpg.gov.za) or Nomvula Ubisi (nomvulau@gpg.gov.za). The last 2 pages of this document must however contain the original signatures of both the researcher and his/her supervisor or promoter. These pages may therefore be faxed or hand delivered. Please mark fax - For Attention: Ebrahim Farista at 011 355 0512 (fax) or hand deliver (in closed envelope) to Ebrahim Farista (Room 911) or Nomvula Ubisi (Room 910), 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg.

APPENDIX Ic

15-08-'07 09:35 FROM- T-348 P02/03 U-349

UMnyango WezeMfundo
Department of Education

Lefapha la Thuto
Departement van Onderwys

Date:	**08 August 2007**
Name of Researcher:	**Ferguson Rene**
Address of Researcher:	**24 Methwold Drive**
	Mulbarton
	Johannesburg
Telephone Number:	**0117173168**
Fax Number:	**0117173009**
Research Topic:	**Situated learning as a teacher development option for religion education in the Life Orientation curriculum**
Number and type of schools:	**60 Secondary Schools**
District/s/HO	**All Districts**

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

Permission has been granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met, and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted:

1. ***The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.***
2. ***The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.***
3. ***A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.***

Director: Knowledge Management and Research
Room 525, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001 P.O.Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000
Tel: (011) 355-0488 Fax: (011) 355-0286

4. *A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.*
5. *The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.*
6. *Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Senior Manager (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.*
7. *Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year.*
8. *Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.*
9. *It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.*
10. *The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.*
11. *The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.*
12. *On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Senior Manager: Strategic Policy Development, Management & Research Coordination with one Hard Cover bound and one Ring bound copy of the final, approved research report. The researcher would also provide the said manager with an electronic copy of the research abstract/summary and/or annotation.*
13. *The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.*
14. *Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Senior Manager concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.*

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

ACTING CHIEF DIRECTOR: OFSTED

The contents of this letter has been read and understood by the researcher.	
Signature of Researcher:	
Date:	15/8/07

APPENDIX II

COMMUNICATION WITH SCHOOLS AND SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX IIa
Letter to School Principals

19th August 2007

ATTENTION: THE PRINCIPAL
LIFE ORIENTATION HOD/EDUCATOR

SENDER: RENÉ FERGUSON

SUBJECT: SURVEY: LIFE ORIENTATION (FET) – RELIGION EDUCATION RESEARCH PHD – STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

Dear Principal

I am a PhD student at Stellenbosch University and a lecturer in Life Orientation, with a particular interest in diversity and Religion Education in the Wits\ School of Education. I am conducting a survey amongst FET Life Orientation educators in secondary schools in Gauteng to determine the extent to which educators have been prepared for the inclusion of diverse religions in the Life Orientation curriculum.

I would appreciate it if one of the educators at your school responsible for Grade 10 and/or 11 Life Orientation would complete the enclosed questionnaire. I have been granted permission by the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct this survey, which is the first phase of my research. Your assistance would enable me to gather the data that I require to define the scope of the next phase of my research.

I have secured the assistance of a Wits student currently on school experience at your school to expedite the process and would appreciate it if the questionnaire could be completed by the educator, placed back into the envelope and returned to the student teacher before he or she leaves your school on the 7th September. Please be assured that all responses to the questionnaire will remain anonymous.

Should you require any additional information or assistance do not hesitate to contact me via the contact details provided below.

Sincere thanks

René Ferguson (Mrs.)
PhD Student: Stellenbosch University

Address:
Wits School of Education
Education Campus: University of the Witwatersrand
27 St. Andrews Rd.
Parktown
Johannesburg.

Contact details:
Email address:

☎Office: (011)
☎Home (011)
Cellular:

APPENDIX IIb

RELIGION AND THE LIFE ORIENTATION CURRICULUM (FET): A SURVEY

Dear FET Life Orientation Educator

I am a PhD student at Stellenbosch University. I am conducting a survey amongst FET Life Orientation educators to determine the nature and extent to which educators have been prepared for the inclusion of diverse religions in classroom practice.

By completing this questionnaire you will be assisting me in collecting data for my research. It should take about 20-25 minutes of your time. I would appreciate it if you would answer all the questions as fully and honestly as possible. Your responses will remain anonymous.

Please may I request that the completed questionnaire be returned to reach me by the 20th September (or sooner if possible),

Sincere thanks
René Ferguson (Mrs)
Contact details:
Email address:
☎Office: (011)
☎Home (011)
Cellular:

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Please indicate to which age group category you belong.
   Tick the appropriate column.

		☑
1	21-30	
2	31-39	
3	40-49	
4	50+	

2. What is your home language?
   Please tick the relevant column.

		☑
1	English	
2	Afrikaans	
3	IsiZulu	
4	seTswana	
5	SePedi	
6	SeSotho	
7	Tshivenda	
8	XiTsonga	
9	isiNdebele	
10	IsiXhosa	
11	SiSwati	
12	Any other language	

Specify _____

3. Please indicate whether you are male or female.

MALE ☐ FEMALE ☐

4. What is your religious affiliation or spiritual orientation?
   Please specify denomination if applicable, or No religion, if applicable.

_____

_____

5. Please state your highest qualification eg HDE, BA (+ PGCE), M.Ed etc.

_____

6. Indicate the district in which your school is situated (as per the official Gauteng Department of Education distribution):

	DISTRICT	☑
1	Ekurhuleni North	
2	Ekurhuleni South	
3	Ekurhuleni East	
4	Gauteng East	
5	Gauteng North	
6	Gauteng West	
7	Johannesburg Central	
8	Johannesburg East	
9	Johannesburg North	
10	Johannesburg South	
11	Johannesburg West	
12	Sedibeng East	
13	Sedibeng West	

7. Did you complete any courses or modules to do with religion in:

7.1. Your undergraduate courses?

Please tick the relevant box.

YES ☐ **NO** ☐

If you answered **YES**, move on to 7.1.1, 7.1.2, 7.1.3 and 7.1.4.

If you answered **NO**, move on to question 8.

7.1.1. What was the name of the course/s or module/s? (eg. Religious education, Biblical Studies, Religious Studies, Jewish Studies, Islamic Studies, Hindu Studies, Comparative religions).

_____

7.1.2. What was the highest level reached? (eg. 5 week module; one year course; Major II etc)

_____

7.1.3. Briefly say what the course or module included?

_____

_____

7.1.4. Did this course or module prepare you to manage teaching and learning about different religions and cultures? Please give reasons for your answer.

_____

_____

_____

_____

7.2. Post graduate courses.

Please tick the relevant box.

YES ☐ **NO** ☐

If you ticked **YES**, answer 7.2.1, 7.2.2, 7.2.3 and 7.2.4.

If you ticked **NO**, move on to question 8.

7.2.1. What was the name of the course/s or module/s? eg Religious education, Biblical Studies, Religious Studies, Jewish Studies, Islamic Studies, Hindu Studies, Comparative religions.

_____

7.2.2. How long was the course or module?

_____

7.2.3. Briefly say what the course or module included?

_____

_____

7.2.4. Did this course or module prepare you to manage teaching and learning about different religions and cultures? Please give reasons for your answer.

_____

_____

_____

_____

B. POLICY AND CURRICULUM

8. How familiar are you with the National Policy on Religion and Education (2003)? Tick the relevant box.

1	I have not heard of the policy	
2	Know of the policy, but haven't as yet read it	
3	I have read the policy, I am familiar with its contents, but don't apply the contents in my teaching.	
4	I am very familiar with the contents and apply the contents in my teaching.	

If you ticked [3] or [4] in question 8, please explain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. Have you attended any in-service training workshops in preparation for teaching Life Orientation Grades 10-12?

Tick the relevant box.

YES ☐ **NO** ☐

If your answer to question 9 is **YES**, move on to 9.1, 9.2, 9.3 and 9.4.

If your answer to question 9 is **NO**, move on to question 10.

9.1. Indicate when (year) and where the training workshops were held.

_____

_____

9.2. List some of the focus areas or topics included in the Life Orientation in-service training workshop/s that you attended.

_____

_____

_____

_____

9.3. Do you feel adequately prepared to teach Life Orientation having attended the workshop/s?

Tick the relevant box.

YES ☐ **NO** ☐ **UNSURE** ☐

Please elaborate on your response.

_____

_____

_____

_____

9.4. Did the workshop/s that you attended include a section or unit on diverse religions and cultures as referred to in the National Curriculum Statement (Grades 10-12)?

Tick the relevant box.

YES ☐ **NO** ☐

If you answered **YES**, please explain briefly what the section or unit included.
If you answered **NO,** move on to question 10.

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. How do you feel about including topics or themes on diverse religions and cultures in your Grade 10 and 11 Life Orientation lessons?

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. Do you think that you have the knowledge and skills to include topics relating to diverse religions and cultures in your Life Orientation lessons?

YES ☐ **NO** ☐ **UNSURE** ☐

Please explain your response.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. Do you believe that you have the knowledge and skills to handle discussions or debates on controversial religious or cultural issues in your Life Orientation classes?

YES ☐ **NO** ☐ **UNSURE** ☐

Please explain your response.

_____

_____

_____

_____

13. Have you included, or do you plan to include topics on diverse religions and cultures in your Grade 10 and/or 11 Life Orientation learning programmes in 2007?

YES ☐ **NO** ☐

(TURN OVER FOR 13.1)

13.1. If **YES**, please give examples of the topics or themes you plan to include or have already included.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

13.2. If **NO**, please give reasons for not including topics or themes on diverse religions and cultures in your Life Orientation learning programmes.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

14. Would you like to have assistance with improving your knowledge of diverse religions and cultures in order to teach these sections in the NCS well?

YES ☐ **NO** ☐

14.1. If you answered **YES**, please explain the kinds of assistance that you would find most useful.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

14.2. If you answered **NO**, could you please give reasons why not.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Many thanks for your participation.

If your answer to Question 14.1 was yes, please email René Ferguson at Rene.Ferguson@wits.ac.za with an outline of the areas in which you need assistance and/or to set up a meeting.

APPENDIX III

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH FOR PhD.

Teacher development for religious and cultural diversity in citizenship education: a community of practice approach

Dear Life Orientation Educator

Your name was given to me by the Life Orientation subject advisor in Gauteng West as a possible participant in the above mentioned research project. I, René Ferguson, am a PhD student at the University of Stellenbosch and an educator in the field of religion education in Life Orientation in the Wits School of Education (University of the Witwatersrand). I hereby invite you to participate in this project, the details of which are outlined below.

Since this is an action research project, there are no risks to yourself. Your contributions to the project will remain confidential and the data will in no way be presented so as to be connected to your school. Please see the attached letter from the GDE granting me permission to conduct my research in Gauteng schools.

Should you agree to participate, I require your permission to use the research results in the writing up of the PhD dissertation, in peer reviewed journal articles and in book chapters.

1. Research question
The main research question to be pursued in the study is as follows:

How, and to what extent, would participation by school-based educators in a community of practice contribute towards developing proficiency relating to a transformed understanding of religion education as a secular discipline in a pluralist society?

The aims of the study are:

- To determine why religion education has been overlooked in Life Orientation teacher development workshops when it is a core focus area in Life Orientation;
- To determine attitudes of educators towards the inclusion of Religion education as a secular discipline in Life Orientation programmes;
- To explore the impact that engagement of educators in a community of practice with regard to understanding religious and cultural diversity will have on the development of educators as practitioners;
- To examine the ways in which educators construct meaning in relation to their socio-cultural realities where religion and religious diversity are concerned;
- To engage school-based educators in an action research process as co-researchers in order to elicit change in practices.

2. Research procedure
Should you agree to participate in the project, you will be involved in the following way:

- Attend an introductory meeting to discuss the aims of the research and participate in a semi-structured focus group interview (or individual interview);
- Attend and participate in a series of fortnightly follow-up workshops/discussion groups to share and give feedback on classroom practice, needs and progress;
- Lesson development and a period of participant observation by myself for data collection;
- Regular documenting of your own ‘journey’ as a participant in this research project in a reflective journal or diary.

Please note that the research methodology is participatory action research, which means that the workshops will also be opportunities for me as the researcher to feedback the findings from your contributions for the purposes of improving on practice. In addition, action research can be quite lengthy, but it gives us time to evaluate and reflect on beliefs, opinions, experiences in the classroom and practice. Your involvement may therefore be required for a period of about 2-3 months.

3. Potential benefits of participation for participants
Participants will contribute towards a report which must be submitted to the GDE. It is anticipated that the research findings will contribute towards teacher professional development in relation to the inclusion of Religion education in Life Orientation. It is also anticipated that a model for leaning and teaching about religion, religions and religious diversity will emerge from the study to be shared with the DoE. All participating schools will be permitted to keep materials developed as a result of participation in the project as well as receive a copy of the final report.

4. Honoria to participants
Provision has been made in the research budget for a small honorarium to be made to participants. As far as possible, travel costs incurred as a result of participation will be reimbursed at the end of the project.

5. Confidentiality
The questionnaire data, audio taped data and transcribed data can at any stage during the research process be reviewed by the participant. Feedback will in any case be given in follow up workshops in the spirit of action research. Tapes will be destroyed as soon as these have been transcribed by the researcher.

In the dissertation and other publications, pseudonyms will be used instead of names of schools and participants unless decided otherwise by the participants. You may withdraw from the project at anytime.

Should you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Professor Cornelia Roux (promoter of the study) at 021-xxxxxxx.

I hereby consent to participate in this study. I grant permission to René Ferguson to use data collected during the research process for publication. I understand that all data, name of my school and my name will be kept confidential in any publications that may ensue from this research project, unless I decide that it is to my benefit to have my identity and that of my school disclosed.

Name of participant: _____

Signature of participant: _____

Name of Researcher: _____

Signature of Researcher: _____

Date: _____/_____/2008_____

APPENDIX IV

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE 1: LIFE ORIENTATION TEACHERS

Site: School A
Date: 6th March 2008.

Names: Teacher 1 Rochelle

Teacher 2 Phumzile

Teacher 3 Tlaletso

1. To which of the grades do you teach Life Orientation?

   Teacher 1 _____

   Teacher 2 _____

   Teacher 3 _____

2. What is your position in the Life Orientation department at your school? Head of Department? Regular educator? etc

   Teacher 1_____

   Teacher 2 _____

   Teacher 3 _____

3. How many classes of Life Orientation are you responsible for all together?

   Teacher 1 _____

   Teacher 2 _____

   Teacher 3 _____

4. Have you attended any GDE run Life Orientation INSET programmes? If so, did the workshops provide you with any of the following information:

   4.1 Policy (SEE SCHEDULE)

   For example:

   - The National Policy on Religion and Education
   - Policy on religion in school?
   - 'Religion education' as a focus area in Life Orientation?

   4.2 Citizenship education
   4.3 Recreation and Physical well-being
   4.4 Career and career choices
   4.5 Human rights in education? If yes, please give examples.

4.6 Values in the curriculum? If yes, please give examples.
4.7 Diverse religions and beliefs? If yes, provide a brief description of what was covered and in how much detail.
4.8 Explanations of term 'indigenous belief systems'?
4.9 Explanations and examples of 'ethical traditions'?
4.10 Bias and discrimination? Provide examples.

4.1 Schedule

Please answer this question by ticking the appropriate column **14. Did the workshops cover any of the following information?**	**Y**	**NO**	**Comments**
14.1 Policy eg The National Policy on Religion and Education. Policy on religion in school. 'Religion education' as a focus area in Life Orientation. 14.2 Citizenship education 14.3 Recreation and Physical well-being 14.4 Career and career choices 14.5 Human rights in education - if yes, please give examples of the kinds of issues covered or mentioned 14.6 Values in the curriculum - if yes please give examples of the kinds of issues covered or mentioned. 14.7 Diverse religions and beliefs – if yes, brief description of what was covered and how much detail. 14.8 Explanations of term 'indigenous belief systems'. 14.9. Explanations and examples of 'ethical traditions'. 14.10 Bias and discrimination. Examples 14.11 Tolerance? Examples? 14.12 Stereotyping? Examples?		I	

APPENDIX V

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE 2: LIFE ORIENTATION TEACHERS

Place: School A: 19th March 2008
Time: 15h00-17h00.
Recorded interview

1. Why are you teaching Life Orientation?
   Probe: Choice? Interest? Do teachers have subjects that fit with Life Orientation? Were they trained to do so? No option? Forced to teach LO?

2. What status is Life Orientation given in your schools?
   Probe for attitudes towards LO in school? Attitudes of Principal? Colleagues? Learners?

3. What is your school's approach to how Life Orientation is taught?
   Probe - inclusive or "subject specific"; different teachers teach different aspects; one teacher teaches all?

4. What are your own thoughts on the Life Orientation learning area? (opinion)

5. How do you feel about teaching Life Orientation?
   Probe: Positive? Enjoyable? Negative?

6. Do you think that your initial training has equipped you to teach Life Orientation comfortably?
   Probe: for focus areas where teachers feel most qualified.

7. Which focus areas are you most interested in?

8. What kinds of in-service training (teacher professional development) for Life Orientation have been offered to you?

9. Did you find the in-service training workshops helpful? (**Probe**: In what sense?)

10. In the in-service workshops, has there been any input or discussion of teaching methodologies, approaches, for teaching LO in general and then religion education more specifically?
    Probe: Ask teachers to provide a brief outline, if response is yes. If no, probe for possible reasons why not?

11. How do you feel about teaching content about diverse religions and cultures?

12. How do you see participation in this series of workshops assisting you in terms of your own professional development as a Life Orientation educator, especially where the inclusion of religion education is concerned?

13. Do you think parents need to be informed about the place of religion in education? Maybe they don't understand the role of teaching about religion and religious diversity in the curriculum?

APPENDIX VI

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW / DISCUSSION 2: TRANSCRIPT

NARRATIVES AND COMMENTARY: TRANSCRIPTS

	Commentary - Teacher opinions on teaching Life Orientation
Question:	How do you feel about teaching Life Orientation?

Commentary 1 - Rochelle
'I think LO is a very long overdue subject. LO is implemented way too late if I can put it that way. If we look a little back we find that the young adults are really not knowledgeable of life, values or things that they are supposed to apply …..in their young adulthood and then ignorance sometimes gets them into real difficulty.
What I also discovered, is that some of the learners only unlock then and you learn behind their lifestyle what they're saying ….so in Life Orientation they actually break down the barriers…speaking of the individual behind the barriers so um..its very interesting for me,… but also for the assessment part ..they (DoE) define how the assessment should be very rigid and um…the topics [?]….how can I say the whole curriculum is not rigid, its very diverse, its very holistic but yet you need to have this ..uh…straight to the point assessments …its boxing us..if I can put it like that.

Commentary 2 - Tlaletso
I think it is very important. The only thing that I don't like…it (Life Orientation) being an examination subject. '.because it deals more with who the child is …deals more with the child so how can I question her or refuse to accept his or her own opinion when she says I like this and this and this ..and then I mark her for that, how am I going to give her marks for that ..'.

Commentary 3 - Phumzi
'I agree with the two former speakers that the subject is very important and necessary for most of our learners, especially if we look at the backgrounds of our learners….I also want to agree with the colleagues that when it comes to assessment that LO is not a written subject …'

Commentary 4 - Phumzi
'….. and then the other problem that we have identified in LO…is the time allocated for the subject is just too little'.

Only one commentary was included here since the other two participants agreed with Phumzi.

The value or importance attached to Life Orientation as a school subject

Commentary 5 - Rochelle
'….we really get the opportunity to deal with…the holistic learner (sic) in front of you so you can really add value to the learner's life…'.

Commentary 6 - Phumzi
'Especially if we look at the background of our learners. Some of them come from child-headed families, some of them coming from families where the parents do not have time to sit down and discuss these things with them'.

Commentary 7 - Rochelle

On some of the topics, learners are actually getting information on forbidden topics …there are certain topics on areas that are not allowed in the household. So the learners go through stages in their lives very ignorant and then Life Orientation makes provision for them to.. to.. to.. interact with some of these areas in their lives.

Probe from RF (interviewer): So what kinds of things do you have in mind when you say forbidden?

The commentary changes to narrative:

Narrative 10- Rochelle
For example, we now have puberty & adult development – some of the learners just shy away, because it is like forbidden and so I discovered one of the youngsters actually closed his ears ..he's 15 years old, he closed his ears ..He says 'No Ma'am' we can't speak on this. So I asked him why..and he said we are not allowed to speak on those things. So he will go and explore and experiment instead of having the knowledge of what will happen and also on the religion area – if it's a Christian home you are not allowed to speak on any other religions amongst or with your family.
And also the HIV/AIDS topic. If the youngsters would come and say, if they speak on this, their parents want to know 'Why do you want to know', 'What did you do?'
so..so.. they are not really getting the information that they need to really help them make good decisions. It's just forbidden in the home.

Code FG2#5	**Commentary - Professional training of participants**

Commentary 8 - Phumzi
No. I'm not well grounded in psychology. I had a little bit of educational psychology and I find this subject heavily embedded in psychology. I realise that I have shortcomings.

FG2#6	**Commentary and Narrative - Shortcomings of Life Orientation INSET programmes.**
Question:	Do you think that your initial training has equipped you to teach Life Orientation comfortably?

Commentary 9 – Rochelle
'….they (INSET facilitators) give information basically, and many a time they read the manual over. They give you the manual, they read the manual over …'.

The other two participants agreed on this experience of INSET. Rochelle expressed the need for INSET to '*take the development to a higher level*', because the teacher is the one who will inform the learner ultimately.

Tlaletso agrees with Rochelle and this commentary prompts further commentary from Tlaletso:

Commentary 10 – Tlaletso
'It's true... within 1 week's time, I attended (in) 2005 at [name of place withheld] and in 2006 at [withheld]. It was just a week's thing and as she (meaning Rochelle) said they go through the manual, and at the end we didn't finish the manual because now we have to follow otherwise they would skip some other modules to say, "no this one is not important let's go to this one" and at the end you are not so much equipped to go back to class. I think what helps us more is that we are already dealing with people outside school and moreover we deal with youngsters, where there is a problem we are always there, and that is why we can cope and help our learners at school level, because some of them, those problems from home, they bring to school and we can cope…

Tlaletso's comment is interrupted by a fairly long anecdote of her conversations with white Grade 12 learners. These Grade 12's hailed from Johannesburg or Pretoria. They sported dyed black hair and numerous piercings. She related that her conversations with these learners earned her their respect, because she had shown an interest in them.

Commentary continues..
It's not a matter of getting some other basic things to help children it's the way you address them …the way you talk to them, that means a lot to them.Whether you are being well Informed about the training of Life Orientation or what ever it's not that important especially in Life Orientation – what is important it's the way you converse with them, the way you address yourself to them, treat them, that they become so free that other people become so shocked … (and ask), "how do you manage"?

Commentary 11 - Rochelle
'Learners start building a bridge of trust. However we can give them minimum guidance on it. For example, the learner who wants to commit suicide - you can talk him out of that action but you did not really help him to, you are not trained to get him out of his mindset…..' ..' We are not psychologists'.

Code FG2#8	**Narrative - Views on including content on diverse religions and cultures**
Question:	How do you feel about teaching content about diverse religions and cultures?

Narrative 11 ~ Tlaletso
'I like it very much because learners must understand diversity of our country. And they have to know that because it's been set in our Constitution, it's accepted into our Constitution. They have to not be stereotyped they have to accept other religions, they have to understand that it's their right to have those religions that they want….We were comparing them because I have all these posters in my class and then they look at the clothing of the Muslims, clothing of the Hindus, clothing of African religions, Christianity and we discuss that you know. At the ultimate as we were discussing some of them they just felt..um..they wanted to say 'my religion is best'. This one will say mine is best…this one mine is best..
But at the ultimate end I would show them that everyone's religion is best for them …
So we have to accept one another as human beings and accept our diversity because just like our cultures are not the same, so the same with our religion we have to accept one another the way we are.'

Narrative 12 - Rochelle (**from classroom experience, an example of a lesson with a Grade 10 class).**
'I actually did a little experiment on diverse religions. Um.. our school is like 99% Christian. So um…. when I did a topic on diverse religions I divided the learners into groups. I gave them all a religion and said they had to defend it. I specifically did not include Christianity. And …it's right your group is Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, and at first the reaction was 'No M'am no. It's like …all this …I'm not supposed to…'
And I said you will defend that religion and I want you to bring us a value system that you think you can learn something from. And um..later on school dismissed and I said ok can I have your group things now when you leave. They refused to leave because they wanted to finish and I was (amazed)...they always run out when the bell rings
[ ]
When they did their report back the first question was …what do they understand by religion and um.. the one group actually stated it very nicely saying that it is the different beliefs that people follow that influence their lifestyle …and uh ..uh you know seeing that they think like that really

made me realize, don't underestimate the children, they really know what they want out of life. And when they started reporting back on their different religions the one thing that came out very, very strong was um..that they took out, if the people follow these religions or beliefs rigidly, then they tend to be very confident and disciplined people and they are not being influenced very easily. And also the clothing of some of the religions …the girls, they don't expose their bodies so that means that their bodies are sacred to them. So they came out with these things and when they gave their feedback I thought ok…they don't realise that they also made me see things a little bit differently you know.. and um some of them asked me why I didn't include Christianity and I said what do you need to know more about Christianity? …it is your religion it is what you believe in and um..so we need to know how we will respond to other religions and one youngster actually said…ok Ma'm so in other words I don't need to follow it, I don't need to believe it, I need to know about it so that I can respect them. I said that is the entire conclusion!

Narrative 13 - Phumzi **(problem-highlighting perspective)**
'In my case it's not that interesting, it's actually very difficult. I find the topic very difficult, especially because most of our learners, let me say 100% of our learners are Christian. So we tend to know very little about the other religions (viz. in School B and the environs). Again they (the learners) are fully aware of the relationships between religion and culture and so what makes it difficult for us is that you see our literature will give us more on the religion and we need to bring in the relationship with the culture …and then what also makes this topic very difficult is that these religions themselves they are not …it's like the Christians it does not mean that all the Christians agree. The same with the Muslims. You find that they also differ in their practice of Islam as a result with our little knowledge we are never satisfied really with the little information that we see.

RF (interviewer): Like in the textbooks?

Phumzi: Yes. You will find that what is in the Grade 11 text book is similar to exactly what we discussed in Grade 8 and in Grade 9

RF: So it's sort of repetitive every year?

Phumzi and Tlaletso together: Yes
RF: But it's the same thing.

Tlaletso: Mm, it's the same thing.

Tlaletso: It's just that with our text book, Grade 8 you might find something and when you get to Gr. 11 it's more complex.

Narrative 14 - Rochelle
You know what I like (to do). What everyone in the group was talking about. One of the things that also differs is clothing from group to group so I asked them (the learners) what is the significance of it. They (the text book authors) don't give it they just say this religion dresses like that, so I actually asked them (the learners), What is the significance in the clothing? Why do you think they wear their clothes like that? Why do you think (when one of the groups did African traditional religion), now why do you think when they have these dances they use animal skin, what's the significance in it, and then there was one of the youngsters says there's no human contamination in it…you know…no human idea was in that… The one group spoke of the saris, these ladies are very elegant but they are well dressed and by the way they are dressed they are actually stating what they represent so instead of just saying what they are wearing I said what do you think is the significance?

RF: So you might be broaching the same subject, but you're taking it into another level, a deeper level.

Rochelle: But like I say, my being involved in these things you're giving me the opportunity to look behind the normal content.

Code FG2#9	**Commentary and Narrative: Views on participation in the Community of Practice**
Question:	What do you think you would like to get out of these sessions that you spend with me?

Commentary 12 - Tlaletso
TIaletso shared that she would like to be able to present diversity in such a way to her learners so they understand more than what she has '*given them for now'*.

Commentary 13 - Rochelle
Rochelle responded with, '*how to handle diversity without anyone being intimidated'*.

I prompted the teachers with a rhetorical question in which I suggested that none of them seem to be opposed to dealing with diversity, that it seemed to me that they had chosen to participate in the research to become better equipped to manage diversity in the classroom.

Commentary 13 continued - Rochelle
Rochelle's response to this prompt came in the form of a comment in which she refers again to the shortcomings of INSET and re- emphasises the need for ongoing and effective teacher development. She emphasised that on the grounds that Life Orientation is a new subject, '*they* (DoE facilitators) *must basically take all the educators through it'* (content on diversity). Taking teachers through a learning process would enhance the teachers' understanding of the diverse beliefs of their learners, as well as generating respect for all religions. This latter point was directed particularly at the idea of generating mutuality between teachers and learners. Teachers need to learn to respond favourably to the diversity amongst the learners, while learners need to learn to respond favourably to the religious identity of their teachers.

Rochelle: *'It doesn't matter which teacher stands in front of them, they will know how to relate'.*

Rochelle's comment is a prompt for a narrative from Tlaletso:

Narrative 16 Tlaletso:
Like I was saying I was listening to 702…this lady was saying I don't understand this information my daughter's dealing with in LO. And the book she is using it's got a lot of stuff that I don't think is healthy for my child to do. So it must be scrapped out of my child's education. I think maybe the teacher did not have what we are having now. Being allowed to converse without showing his or her own religion. That because sometimes it does happen you end up taking your own religion to dominate the children you are teaching. Whereas you are just there to guide them, show them the correct thing. You know, pick from all the diversity of our country and then discuss with them, let them discuss …and give them the overall thing that will make them to tolerate one another to accept one another as we are and remove that stereotyping from them.

Rochelle responds with a narrative of her own in which the main idea is an incident that involved the way a certain religion was taught to her daughter at school and her own personal reaction to it.

Narrative 17: Rochelle

You know I had a problem with a religious education topic with my daughter one year and I actually phoned the school. Knowing the school's standards and value system, here comes my daughter with an assignment on a certain religion and they had an in depth study and a project…
Now the fact that the project was on this specific religion tells me that this is what they want to inculcate. And it was about um..if I might just say in the beliefs in the moon that the moon is a god,

..but they went to explain that thing very indepth whereas I felt that is now really …. putting so here comes my child..now mummy, if the moon is a god and you need to bow down and immediately it flipped me it triggered me that this thing was now installed as a value in my child and that I spent a long time to break that thing down, because children at a certain age are very vulnerable and I mean not even in our immediate or community where our school is, is that religion practiced. So what really confused me, is why would we go into such great depth to do such a deep research on something like that.

I must just bring information across in order for is to understand one another better in order for us relate to one another to respect one another, but not to lay a new foundation on your belief.

Tlaletso: Maybe the problem as presented on 702, is because teachers didn't have ability to put the religions across.

This dialogue prompts a comment from Phumzi: information on other religions (is necessary) so that as a facilitator in class it adds to the self-confidence of the teacher. We need information on indigenous religions.

APPENDIX VII: The Manual

Refer end of dissertation.

APPENDIX VIII

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION 4: TRANSCRIPT

DATE: 22ST JULY 2008.
Site: School B

(Works and phrases in round brackets indicate where teacher amended the transcript)

Discussion started with question to Tlaletso to which she was asked to respond in her reflective journal:

Why do you think you are tolerant towards diverse religions given that you are a devout Christian?

Narrative 18
Tlaletso: My tolerance comes from the Bible. I don't have discrimination. If you come to my meetings I have had different women they don't wear uniforms – there are Methodist, Zion, ZCC, all are welcome. The Bible destroys the works of the devil. The Bible speaks of one man, Jesus Christ, because we are sharing the same Bible – why call them names? (the churches). Whether someone is a sangoma I accommodate them too. Everyone loves (Virtuous Women's Fellowship), they take what they have learned and implant it in their families.

Phumzile: are you tolerant with the learners?

Tlaletso: I am tolerant with the learners. In my school I have a Grade 9 boy. He is a coloured boy. He wrote 'vok meid' in toothpaste on a chair. He is an angry boy, because I asked him to sit in front because he was misbehaving –
[this is a repeat of an account of an incident which had taken place in her class a few weeks previously – she now tells Phumzile about it]

After the boys left the class, she decided to take the matter to the deputy principal.
The principal told the boys to apologise. The boys came, blaming one another.

I said to them, ok, I forgive you. [shortened version of the account]

Tlaletso: I was very much angry….I could make it to be something to be in the papers. But actually I could make a big issue out of it, because definitely it is unacceptable... unacceptable..

Even up to today I am not even angry with these boys and from the beginning even when he did not want to talk to me I didn't bother I would say ok it's from home..

[End of narrative]

Phumzile: comments (cannot pick up from the recording)

[Something funny, all laugh…]

It could be one boy, a drop in the ocean or two, . because the majority…you won't believe me the majority of people who give me real respect are the Afrikaners. The matrics when they are sitting at the corridor, when they are sitting there, when I pass they stand up they put their hands on the side

"Môre Juffrou"…

Big boys, not small boys and they will greet me the whole day (as long as I meet them they will greet me). The whole day..

With our children if they greet me in the morning - that's it if they meet me in the corridor they will never say hello

Phumzile: [could not hear]

Narrative 19
Tlaletso: So now again my tolerance even when I am in class I accommodate any question.

Whatever questions they ask me…

"Ma'am why are the taxi drivers like this? Why there are people who put on blue (overalls or) dresses on Sunday? Why?… you know what all those things (mean) and I am able to answer all those (questions). Most of the time after we have spoken they are all happy
(and satisfied with the answers).

You never find somebody saying Ma'am is saying this about us (learners complaining about attitude from me). Ma'am is (criticising our religion. No such sayings).

I do have two boys saying they are witches
I didn't know (whether it is possible) that you can call yourselves a witch
I say why do you call yourself witches?

Then they show me in their cell phones a lot of funny things that they believe in. They have [heads sucking cats]. All these..

I say to them why do you keep such things? And they say….[it is their belief]

RF: They don't seem to have an understanding though.

Tlaletso: I don't know because [they are day scholars]

Phumzile: comments [cannot hear from recording].

RF: One of the religions that is becoming very popular amongst young people
these days is Wicca.

Tlaletso: Wicca?

RF: Wicca is sometimes also called Paganism

Tlaletso: I have heard of Paganism.

RF: There are lots of people who are tired of being told of what they have to believe or that Christianity is the only way and they are saying it can't be the only way. It is very non-authoritarian and based on the idea ,
Explanation by René of Wicca - harm none.

If they are using animals in a wrong way …a harmful way then they don't really know what Wicca is.
It may be that they are trying to make an impression on you by saying they know what it means to be a witch.

That's going to get people to react to them. It sounds sensationalist.
[RF continues with an explanation of Wicca]

Tlaletso: Ja… Ja

RF: The people are very gentle…I think in SA when you say witch
baloyi the people are going to ……or umthakati it is already negative.

Tlaletso: MM yes yes..

RF: If you are armed with the information then you are able to address the questions.

RF: They are well within the freedom of religion clause, so they can be witches if they want to be.

Tlaletso and Phumzile: Ja ja

RF explains about Wiccan weddings – etc.

RF: For Wiccans it is actually a positive thing to be called a witch [continues to explain]

It will be interesting to see what pictures they had because the Wiccans would never harm animals, not use animals in a bad way.

But yourself not knowing too much about it, you couldn't really ask the right kinds of questions.

Tlaletso: I didn't have relevant questions to ask them.

RF: I can imagine in the big cities the kids may be more exposed and come to know about Wicca more so than the kids out in the countryside.

Where do they live? Where do they come from? Do they board there?
Do they come from JHB?

Narrative 20
Tlaletso: No, the one […] and the other one he grew up in the farms. Now this chap is in the hostel. I wonder why the parents sent them to the hostel?

And then these other three girls they like dark hair. They dye their hair pitch black.
They've got earrings all over their ears. They have tongue rings. They've got rings here (on their bellies and nose)..
But they put them after school. And they are so arrogant. Yew, yew, yew……

It was the talk of the whole school. The principal will call them in, this teacher will call them…

I called them spoke to them politely and discover they are not doing anybody anything

RF: No they're not.

Tlaletso: when I speak to them it's nothing

It's just some teachers you know …Because some teachers call it a Christian school. They shouldn't be showing themselves that they are Satanists. So it became an issue…

But when you speak to them there is nothing (nothing wrong with them).

[Describes interaction with these learners] – Can I see you [name] bring your friend?
They just become arrogant because of the way things have been said about them you know …

With me if I'm on duty..
I don't even talk to them. If they greet me …Hello my darling. If they greet me….Hello.

If they don't greet me…. hello my darling. If they don't …no problem again.

[End of Narrative 20]

Tlaletso: ok how did I get into teaching diversity and culture?

Narrative 21
In my mind diversity prevails in my preparation that I'm going to explain in a way that different learners from different religions will be happy with the discussion. Even if we can talk about clothing, rituals of different religions whatever we talk about if this one comes from Allah or from Islam from Christian Roman Catholic they like the rosary. When I discuss about these they end up understanding. Different learners clothing rituals, different religions

Roman Catholics like their rosary. According to Christianity it is unacceptable (Exodus 20:4) but when I discuss about that they understand, (because I don't criticise them, but give them the fact about the Bible as they are also Christians believing in the Bible).

Ma'am is this allowed? If you like it, if you believe in it, put it on it's yours.
It doesn't mean that if it is not allowed someone shouldn't put it on. If you like it put it on. Because we've got a belief with us, the Bible says in Exodus 20:4. Don't bow to anything that has been made by man's hands

So after discussing with them everyone will be very happy. It's very rare you will find after our discussion that someone is unhappy There was a Muslim boy ….
if we are offending you accept our apologies. This is a lesson we wanted to discuss
if we want to get into other religions we must know what you don't like we must know what are the principles in your church we are open to talking about these things..

Phumzile: {can't hear}

Tlaletso: Fortunately most of the time the principal (would comment on our "Dit en Dat"…) in the leaflet that we've got (at our school) diversity of religion in our school. We must understand it.

[ ]
[ ]

Phumzile: cannot hear (too far away from recorder)

Narrative 22
Tlaletso: [Explains some conversation about the school with a shop keeper]

Tlaletso: The shop keeper says, You know anybody at Bekker?

This lady says 'Yes' I know … a teacher at Bekker that's Mrs. T…. and this one says 'I hate Mrs. T….' (meaning Tlaletso).

And then this lady says such a sweet lady. Why do you hate such . (couldn't hear) lady
Lady says: She (meaning Tlaletso) asked us not to come to our school with our religion

Phumzile: [can't hear]

Tlaletso: She said I refused their religion to come to our school.
And this lady said to her what religion are you? She said we are Mormons.

The principal says I know you are Christian look at that [ ].

RF: Usually they keep very much to themselves so it is interesting that they wanted to come and do something in your school.

Tlaletso: The Principal said, but Tlaletso…… I didn't have time I make some excuses because I didn't want to do this…I've got this… I've got netball in the afternoons
You know I had so many excuses and then
….

Gist: Explanation of why this lady was not given time to present her religion at the school.
Seems the teachers were given a letter from a Mormon woman requesting that she be allowed to present her religion to the school.
The letter is passed to another teacher

She couldn't understand because she also calls herself a Christian. Then she went back to the principal.
The principal called me: Why did you not follow up with this thing?
I said Meneer I gave it to Mrs. S…
But we still have time there's two weeks to go we still have time to prepare this and then he said to me it seems Mrs. S doesn't want to do this. Why?

RF: You mean teach this, teach this in the class?

Tlaletso: No we've got CSV (Afrikaans word) the Christian movement whereby during breaks they get together they pray they sing they read the Bible do some dramas and all that. They want to come and do their thing at our school so we have to prepare for them. And then we can still help them.

Tlaletso: I organised for them, but when they were doing it I didn't attend. I organised the stage, the sound system, but when they came I didn't attend. …I think maybe her daughter told her mother I didn't attend
[…]

They don't talk about Christ.

[end of narrative]

RF: They do talk about Christ.

Tlaletso: No no they don't.

RF: Yes they do.

Tlaletso: No, do they?

RF: They do - Explains that Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses don't believe in the doctrine of the Trinity. There are reasons for split in the churches on the grounds of trinity doctrine.

RF explains the reason for split between historical denominations and new religions.

Their interpretations of the Bible may be different to Protestants and Catholics.

Part of the diversity of Christianity.

They don't like to call themselves Christianity they call themselves Latter Day Saints, you might have heard of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Tlaletso: Yes they call themselves Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

RF: They do believe in Jesus Christ but they don't believe in the Trinity.

Tlaletso: Oh that's it

RF: Where all the regular churches that you are familiar with do they don't believe that Jesus was God.
Usually they keep very much to themselves so it's strange that they wanted to come and do something ….Is there quite a big community near your school or in this area?

Tlaletso:[ ]

RF: One of the hardest things – talking of tolerance …it's very difficult to be tolerant towards people similar to yourself.

Tlaletso (picks up where the LDS members live): No it's in the farms, in the farms…. one house there… one house there.

RF: So they're quite scattered.

Tlaletso: Yes they're quite scattered. I think it's because their children come to the school so they wanted to come and do something.

RF: My comment on that is one of the hardest thing…one of the last things about tolerance....in my own thinking. I think it's much easier to be tolerant towards people you understand little about. It's much easier to be tolerant with Jews and Muslims and Hindus because you expect them to be different to your own, but when people are much closer to you and the beliefs are different and the interpretation …. you're coming from same Bible but you find it more difficult to exercise tolerance and I understand exactly what you're saying and I suppose it's something we need to decide…there's someone I know from UNISA she said there's no strange or weird religion there's just religion we don't understand.

Tlaletso: Yeah..yeah…

RF: The same thing goes for WICCA, even for Satansim, it goes for the Latter Day.. or what we call New religious movements, they are break away from established religions: Jehovah's Witnesses. LDS ….Hare Krishna

Tlaletso: it's very much harder to be tolerant.

[Spate of discussion on difficulties associated with being tolerant]

RF explains new religions and why there are tensions between 'mainline' religions and new movements.

Explains a little more about Latter Day Saints – they are peace loving, they promote family life.

Phumzile asks if the Mormons are the same as the choir in USA.
Are we talking about the same people.

RF explains the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.
Origins in USA, Salt Lake City in Utah.

They don't like to be called Mormons. They prefer to be called Latter Day Saints to separate themselves from the practice of polygamists in USA who have many wives.

The LDS prefer to have one wife

Tlaletso: Their argument is taken from the Bible

RF: Yes if you think about Solomon who had …..

Tlaletso: .. more than 700 wives and 160 concubines.

Phumzile: comments jokingly.

RF: Those are very interesting stories.
OK Have you managed to actually formulate Life Orientation lessons since I last saw you?

Tlaletso: the ones I wrote here (in her journal) are from the past
No time.

RF: So there hasn't been much time

Tlaletso: Not much time.

RF: So how long ago was the lesson you wrote about?

Tlaletso: I think it's the 4th May.
[this interview conducted 21 July]

RF: So that's the last time you taught?

Tlaletso: I meet them once in a cycle of 6 days.

RF: So Phumzile you meet them ….3 times?

Phumzile: I meet classes 3 times in a cycle of 7 days.

RF: it is problem trying to fit everything in?

Tlaletso: And this morning they sent us a circular you must fill in …the last column said when do you think we will finish the whole syllabus? Write the date.

So we are no longer teaching we tell them go read activity ….we are just doing activities in the textbook there is no time to discuss. Here is the activity go do it.
There's no time to discuss. We don't have time to do the work.

RF: So are you using the text book. Are you using the activities in a textbook?

Tlaletso: Ja ja

Tlaletso: Whatever the topic we've got to discuss this topic because that is the purpose of LO is making the learners aware of what is happening around them. …

We need to write down
They need to understand the community they are living in the problems they are facing the problems of crime how you combat what you can do in your community
[can't hear]
and moreover children are taking it so lightly like I said I am meeting them once in a cycle so some of them don't turn up.
So many of them don't turn up.

RF: They don't turn up?

Tlaletso: Yes they don't come to class.

RF: So where do they go?

Tlaletso: They hang around or go to other people's classes.
(Explains how the classes are split up – complex arrangement)
Teaching one class in three - different keys – one is doing LO reading one is doing LO sport so we find few of them come to me. They go to reading, chess etc.

Lengthy explanation about learners not attending LO.

Learners have a choice to go to various options within LO – LO reading, LO chess.
LO Sport. Few of them come to me, few to this one, few to that one.. Checks register but numbers go down.

RF: It sounds a bit of a mess. Things will never work out if the whole thing is structured like that. It's never going to work out..

Tlaletso: Exactly it is ….

Explains how the exam is split between various colleagues.
Diff colleagues set different questions on the exam paper.

Each teacher marks own question.

RF: Sjoe! That makes it quite difficult to follow through in a project like this. We were just having a nice discussion on the Mormons but now. But to actually have the opportunity to carry this kind of information through in to the classroom makes it very difficult

Tlaletso: Ja, you can't. They are so demotivated – even when we bring a topic or open the text book should we talk about this…

Phumzile asks about language

Tlaletso: No with us they don't have a problem they can speak in Afrikaans. They speak in English.

RF: Are you obliged to use the text books. What if you created lessons yourself. If you designed lessons yourself rather than the text book. Would it not be more attractive?

Tlaletso: It would be more attractive, it would be attractive, it would be better that way, but the problem with our children when it is towards exams. You must tell them the pages to study.

RF; But don't you think if your designing lessons they would still have things in their books, the activities that you designed that they could still achieve that that they could still have things to learn… to study and also if you ..LO is not really a subject where something can be learned off by heart. Where you could give them case studies - you know we're talking about outcomes-based education setting up learning experiences where in the class your learners are given the opportunity to formulate an opinion about an issue so in the exam the same thing happens…. the learners are given an opportunity to formulate opinions, argue for or against something - presenting a point of view based on something you have done in the class.

RF: What if we looked at putting something like that together
Wouldn't that help. Because every time I speak to someone I am getting the same message back. The learners are so sick of the text books, they don't see any relevance um…in the exercises and activities that they are expected to do from the text book, they are bored, they lack enthusiasm,

they don't co-operate. And for me that is actually quite terrible because this learning area has so much potential of growing human beings.

So what if we make that part of the project over the next two months where we look at putting things together for ourselves talking about it in the group
and coming up with something. We don't only have to focus on religion – we can incorporate with human rights, values etc.
What if we try so that we can get some life into the subject otherwise if we don't do something, if we don't have some kind of action….And that's what my project is about it's action research …..We are looking at the problems. And I think for all the sessions that we have had together all we seem to have done is identify problems with little beacons of light in between, but what we need to do is take those and turn them into learning experiences that will inject some enthusiasm into the classroom. …

Take your particular contexts and turn them into learning experiences

Phumzile: [can't hear]

Don't really want to stretch beyond September

RF: we don't really want to stretch beyond September.

[ ]

RF: We don't want to say this did not work. Because then that is not action research.

Phumzile: [ ] Explains action research and the importance of the participants to the research. What you are also doing now is you are engaging in reflection and part of the action is learning also to be reflective so it's about maybe asking new questions about your learners, about your own practice and saying ok this is isn't working so let's try something else

Gives example of LO teacher who generates own materials from newspapers, snippets of the news on TV, and whatever is current. Let's take for example the xenophobic violence, think of all the things that come out of that. All of the Constitutional values …cultural identity, how people respond to the 'other'.
Dealing with culture, dealing with poverty, dealing with violence. We don't have to kill each other just because we don't like each other. And he develops all these materials out of the newspapers …
He says he doesn't use one text book.

You don't have to be generating lots of paper. It can be you making little packs, each learner works with others in a group. Each group gets a pack using articles out of newspapers and magazines, you setting questions …having them feedback instead of boring activities or some ridiculous activity out of a text book, that someone is making money out of …

Tlaletso: I used to collect some books and photocopies for them to work off….
Expresses problem associated with dividing class into three – can't do anything on my own that I want to do.

RF: Explains how the community of practice can be encouraged in the school as a whole. Develop a community of practice around a group of Life Orientation educators. With all the LO teachers who teach together you are forming a COP The benefit of that is you use your particular talent, skills and knowledge to contribute and if everybody does that you share with each other. You don't have to be in competition with each other.
Sharing with each other and working with each other, lightening the load but also
being in conversation with each other, in dialogue with each other.

If you just have a look at the document - refers participants to agenda document 22 July workshop sharing some of the data.

Tlaletso: Is this from the data?

RF: Yes, not just from you, but also from the questionnaires.

[Reference to emphasis on defining but not practice in LO]

RF: Your particular contexts are so different. There's you (Tlaletso) as a devout Christian, the Afrikaners, the children who are interested in sort of new age belief systems.

You (meaning Phumzile) have children you have said are predominantly Christian, but there is clear evidence of cultural influences.

Rochelle has her school. Mainly 'Coloured' children. Or "Coloured " and Black children?

Phumzile: Mostly "Coloured children".

RF: And one thing I noticed right at the beginning is the strong Christian charismatic influence in that community.

Look at the interesting stories that are created by diversity. Not the stories that have been created in the curriculum or the diversity created in the textbooks
But the starting point is the stories created by you in your contexts.

Nothing has been said or done to create an awareness for you in your clusters
Am I right?

Tlaletso: Yes

RF: You can collaborate around knowledge construction. Your experiences will contribute towards the way in which you construct knowledge. So what knowledge do you need in this school? I don't know. I come from the city, my experience is of the city. On just about every street corner there is a different place of worship. In my area those photographs that I gave you are all taken within a 30km radius of my campus.

And it is a different story here but together we can collaborate to put the information together to create resources…

Shared research observations: see agenda summary doc 21 July

Explains problems with top down transmission of information where religions are concerned.

RF: The best story you gave me (Phumzile). When you said you went to a wedding. You said you were invited to a wedding at Modise's church and you said to me there were so many brides and grooms. Now there is a story and it's a story that you should write down - your own account.

So you writing about your experiences is already a resource.

END

APPENDIX IX

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS: TLALETSO

School C

TLAOBS. 1.1

21 August 2008.

The teacher is a woman in her fifties. She will be referred to as Teacher T. She is the only Black teacher in this school. Her first language is seTswana but her English is good and the medium of instruction is English and Afrikaans. She is able to swap between English and Afrikaans as well as various African languages.

Session 1 Grade 9 class (approx. 35 minute lesson)

General atmosphere in the class

The class is multicultural. Interesting on the grounds that the school was/is historically Afrikaans medium and white. The language of teaching and learning in this class is English, although the language of teaching and learning could be Afrikaans. The learners are English or Afrikaans speaking. The level of English amongst the learners is very good.

The atmosphere in the class was laissez faire. Learners sauntered into the room and settled down fairly quickly. Learners were polite towards Teacher T and towards one another.

Learners were open and willing to speak and share on the topic.

The topic: Difference

Teacher T used the prescribed textbook. All the learners in the class had their own copy.

Teacher T: We are done with xenophobia, now we are going to speak about language and culture.

She introduces the topic as *Language and culture.*

Introductory question

Teacher T: By the way how many languages are there in South Africa?

Learners in unison: Eleven
One learner says: No 12.
Then spend some time debating whether 11 or 12.

Teacher T: So do you agree then that we have 11;
Learners: Yes Mam.
Teacher T: 11 official languages

The class then spends time offering suggestions what the languages are.
Teacher T asks learners to name the languages.

Someone mentions (‘Stamto’).

(Stamto) is nearly fanagalo. But it’s not fanagalo. It is Afrikaans, Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana.

Learner: It’s like slang.

Some time of offering examples of fanagalo..

Ok so those are the languages we have in our country.

Teacher T: OK so do we have the same cultures?

Learners: No

Teacher T: No, we don't have the same cultures.

Teacher T: The values – are they the same?
Learners: No
Teacher T: I want someone to explain to us. Are the values the same because the languages are not the same? Zulus speak their own, Afrikaans speak their own but are the values the same? Can someone explain to us?

Ja, Jeanne

Learner: Um Mam. With all the different cultures and stuff we are brought up in different ways the values might be similar but they are not all the same.

Teacher T: Some are similar, similar from Afrikaans, English, Tswana what is similar between all those values?

Learners offer responses: [Recording not clear] someone say 'respect'.

Teacher T: Yes, With all cultures respect others, respect is the most important. But even though we respect differently hey? With African or Zulus, Shangaan how do you respect others? Do you call them by name?

Learners: No.
Learner offers response: unclear.

Teacher T agrees with learner: Uh, you have to bow down a little bit. uh

And how do you address them?

Learner offers response: unclear.

Teacher again agrees: Yes so there is a way you must address people. You must say Malume….(uncle in seTswana]

Don't look them in the eye. You look down hey?

Learner: Mam why don't you look them in the eye?

Some comments from the class.
Some discussion ensues - learners offer explanations as to why young people don't look adults in the eye in African culture.

Teacher T: Ok here is your question. Why don't you look them in the eye?

Learner: Because when you look them in the eye it says you are equal.

Teacher T: Ok that's useful. He says when you look them (meaning adults) in the eye you are saying you are equal. You are talking to your friends you know you can speak the way you like. So the thing is you have to bow down a little bit with your eyes you know….kyk af!!

Learners laugh

Learner: If you look them in the eye they tell you are not telling the truth.

Learner offers something else (ReCN)

Teacher T: Oh here is another one. The Afrikaans children are to be seen and not heard.

Learner (who is Afrikaans) offers explanation of how to address adults – Mr. or Mrs. and if they say call me by my name then you say *Oom* or *Tannie* you don't address them by their names.

Teacher T: OK then it means it is the same as other cultures. IN Tswana they will say *Ausie*, Zulus will say *Usisi*, *uButi* the brother and in Afrikaans they will say *Tannie, Oom* en *Tannie*

Learner: We say Oom en Tannie, but then call our brothers and sisters boetie and sussie

Teacher T: Oh you also say boetie en sussie?

Learner: Yes

Teacher T: (exclaims) Sjoe we're all South African!! Can you see that we're all South African. Like I said what is the same in all of our cultures; The way we address elderly people, call our brothers and sisters boetie and sussie, oom en tannie, because the thing is with us we do the same.

OK, let's quickly read here *Freedom of language and culture*

Read from the text book: "Culture is related to a specific belief, comes from social behaviour of a particular group of a people".

Now we have been talking about a diversity of religion.

We have been talking about diversity of our cultures. Now we are going to speak about specific beliefs. Do we have the same beliefs all of us?

Learners mumble altogether: No

Teacher T: How many religions do you know about in South Africa?

Learners: Four

How many religions? Candice?

Someone says six.

Teacher T: You know Christianity?

Another learner offers: African religion.

Teacher T: OK African religion.

Christianity.

How do you see that these are Christians?

Learner: Mam they speak a lot about God and the Bible. Like you.

All laugh.

Teacher T: (Laughs) They speak a lot about God like me.

Learner: Mam but you have a way of speaking about it. You don't …..you don't… how can I say. You speak like sometimes you say what is said in the Bible, like Corinthians blah blah blah blah. And things like that.

Teacher T: OK So I have a way of saying it that's how you got me?

Learner: Yes Mam.

Teacher turns to another Learner: You said Hindu.

Learner: Says no Mam. I'm talking about Christianity.
We show we are Christians we wear a rosary and some of them carry their Bibles.

Teacher T: Ok…. OK….. She says some of them they wear their rosary and others they carry their Bibles. Ok… Ok…

Is that all?

Learners: No Mam.

Teacher T: Is that all the symbols showing that we are Christians?

Learners: No no

Learner: You know I wanted to ask something ? Is there a difference between Christians and Catholics?

A learner adds in the background: They are all just Christians.

Teacher T: They fall under Christians all of them.

Learner: Mam ok you get Christians and the Catholics and Anglicans are denominations of Christianity. They are like separate groups I think.

Teacher T: Oh they are denominations? OK. Then what's Christianity?

Learner: Christianity is a belief I guess. I guess it's just the overall belief in God.

Teacher T: OK the overall belief in God. So the Catholics all of them they also come into Christianity?

Learner says: Yes.

Teacher T: Ok some Christians you can see with their clothes. Different clothes. Different colours. You know when we had the women's day it looked so beautiful. They looked so beautiful! All colours. We had red and white, blue and white, green and white, yellow, white and green, black and white. All colours. Green and yellow. It was so beautiful. Because it was women's day. We were all Christians gathered together. And it looked so beautiful.
One could see the real diversity in the religion. When you looked at all those colours.

African religion… how can you see that this person is in African belief?

Learner: It's some of the things we say. I don't know how to say in English
[ ]
(offers something in isiZulu).

Teacher T: Oh you've got a ceremony. Ok so they've got their own way of doing their thing. You can realise oh, these are African religion. Because most of the time they can say they've got a ceremony that they go.
Do they do it during the day or in the evening?

Learners: Some say In the evening.
"In the morning";
Others say "In the evening"

Teacher T: Differs from one culture to another. Because there are those who do it in the evening and those who do it in the morning.

Learners: Early in the morning.

Teacher T: Oh early in the morning.

Must be very early.

Discussion ensues as to when this ceremony takes place.
Most people do it in the dark.
The family only
That group only.

Teacher T: Another one.

Learner: Mam also the Muslims.

Once during I don't what period it is but during that period they fast and they cover…

Teacher T interjects: Is it not the period of Maradan (sic)?

Learner corrects: Ramadan.

All get the pronunciation correct after various learners offer.

Learner who is speaker continues: I think so Mam, I don't know Mam, and also cover the tombstones. They say they don't want the spirits to go in there. They fast for 40 days,

Learners interject: huh 40 days.
(Someone fills in 'From early in the morning')

Continues: and then oh yes

Teacher interrupts: 40 days during the day they don't eat only in the morning?

Learner continues: They don't drink any water they don't eat any food and they don't eat anything. Only at night ……they eat a small portion of food.
Then round about 10 o' clock at night they eat a small portion of food.

(Various comments)

Teacher T: Cindy?

Learner 2: Muslims they have a calendar in Ramadan time. It has times and then they are allowed to eat in those specific times. It's usually after sunset. And then they have a feast. They said the adults feast from sunset to sunrise and the children will eat just before they go to bed and then when they wake up. They wake up early to eat even for example if they do sport they are not allowed to have any water or anything during the fast.

And you fast the girls usually from 10 years and boys from 12 years.

Teacher T: from 12 during the day?

Learner 2: No the ages.

Teacher T: Oh the ages. And the girls start from 10. I wonder why from 10 the girls?

Learner 2: Girls mature earlier than boys.

Argument amongst learners as to whether this is true or not. Some boys said it depends on individuals.

Cannot hear – class erupts!!! Especially the boys.

Teacher T: Alright so we have all those religions hey? And then with their symbols what we idenitify them with, the ceremonies that they do, their clothing, their diets. As she already said, they fast. And uh…Who knows anything about the Buddhaists (sic)?

Learner 3: Mam, Buddha they believe in Buddha. Ja, he was enlightened and basically that all religions are……

Teacher T interjects: Can you see them? By appearance or clothes or whatever?

Learner 3: You can see the monks because they wear robes but the usual people you don't notice. But they believe that all the religions are right. And they believe in reincarnation with come back and every lifetime you get a different religion so you learn more and when you have enough knowledge you are enlightened. Ja, that's about it.

Teacher T: Ok. One of the matrics said they went to China during school holidays. Remember there was a group that went over there.

[Class mumbles agreement].

Learner says: A tour group.

Teacher T: A tour group yes.They said when they were in China.

Learner interjects: Hong Kong.

Teacher T: Oh Hong Kong. Ja. On the street somewhere along on the street they have some alters they don't have time when to pray if they just want to pray. If it's 9 o'clock and this one wants to pray she gets to that alter then she prays. There are temples a lot of them for people to come in and pray but there are also those alters along the road whereby if you want to pray at any time you just go down there and you pray.

Alright ….

Teacher resumes reading from the text book:

"Culture has been described as the thing that makes us different from other people in terms of the way in which we live".

Asks the class – Is it true?

Class responds: Yes.

Teacher continues:It is important for people to feel that they belong that they form part of a bigger group. In SA we are privileged to have a wide variety of cultures.

Ok as we say we've got different cultures. Jews they've got their own,
Tswana's they've got their own, Shangaans they've got their own, Afrikaners they've got their own. All these other groups we have our own different cultures.
And ..

Resumes reading:

"Some cultural groups that have experienced persecution in the past are trying very hard to ensure that the survival of their culture".

It is true a lot of us today, our cultures are going down.

Addresses learner: What is your name? [….]

Mphumi says why do we look down when we speak to adults? It shows she is not doing it and she has never done it. Therefore she doesn't know why we look down. This is one of the signs that gradually our cultures are moving away. And why, why are our cultures moving away?

Learner: [not clear on recording…]

Teacher T: Ok she says because of music makes you want to belong elsewhere with other people.

Learner: Mam I think …

Teacher T: Ok.

Learner: I think most of our parents especially our generation did not teach us culture from the beginning.

Teacher T: I think she's right. From the beginning the majority of you were never taught all these things. From the beginning they sent you to Model C Schools. The majority of you started Sub A Grade 1 grade 2 in Model C schools. And a lot of you because of that you wanted to integrate with other cultures. You wanted to be able to imitate other cultures. Because now if you are being taught by a white teacher she is going to want you to look her in the eyes. And if you don't do that she is going to think you are trying to hide something. Because if you don't want to imitate her.

So that is why a lot of us decided we are going to forget about this culture we are not going to teach our children to bow down you know or sometimes taking something you know bow down with both hands. Ok Thembi.

Learner: OK Mam but sometimes with some cultures such as Muslims [ ]
unclear. They go to Muslim schools.

They still have their customs from long ago.
Mentions something about when a husband cheats???

Teacher T: Ok Thembi says that where Muslims go to Muslim schools then they go on. So they carry on with their culture and all the values of Islam.

Learner: Talks about mixed marriages/

Teacher: Agrees with the learner – 'It's true' – the mixed marriages we are having in our country. [unclear]

Learner: Mam just on what Thembi said. The Muslims believe that the men are superior. There's a story about someone in Iraq or somewhere, not Iraq, Saudi Arabia, where the husband cheated with another lady. The lady he cheated with got killed not him.

Some exclamations form learners: HAU!
Noisy response from the class.

Teacher T: …[ ] the ANC women's league was called out to go

Learenr: It was in the newspapers.

Teacher T: I think it is somewhere in Africa the ANC women's league they were prepared to go to…I think is Zambia, or …

Researcher helps: Nigeria

Teacher T: Yes Nigeria
The ANC women's league they said they are going there and this woman is not going to be killed, they are going to stand by this woman.

Those are some of the cultures that we meet as we grow up.

Learner: comments [not clear]

Teacher T: So from the beginning your parents are not teaching you these things.

It is true, I learned the hard way of my culture bowing down with both hands.

I went to Australia with the South African junior league (netball) all the presidents…and I was the only black. And then we were in Sydney and it was very cold, so then the first day someone was going to speak Afrikaans

[Part of this sharing not clear]

So it was the day for the Cape Town people to buy chips for us. And then the two ladies one from Gauteng (Oosthuizen) and (Du Plessis) from Pretoria took me they said [….] please kom, kom, kom, then they took me to the bathroom and said please when the Cape Town people give you packet of chips don't take with both hands. That's my culture I always do that, both hands and if I'm standing I will even bow a little bit. It's my culture. So they said to me, we're asking you, please please,
when these people from Cape Town, when they give you chips don't take them with both hands and bow if you are standing and if you are taking don't use both hands just take with one hand and say thank you. Man, I am not used to it. I was so scared.

Why do they want me to do this? I am not going to do this. You know I had this in my heart I am not going to do this I am going to do what I am used to I am going to take the chips with both hands like I always do. And then Louise came to me again and she said, jy moenie vergeet nie vat dit met een hand en sê dankie.

I am in trouble here, I have to do it I am not used to it I was so scared and it was two ladies from Cape Town Marina and Marline, they came with a big box of chips and they started giving to everybody. Man, I wanted to take with both hands and I could feel Louise was looking at me and Rita was looking at me I had to take out one hand I stretched my hand out and I say dankie. Yo, Marina shouted at me, [unclear] I was so scared…then one of them said now what do you want Marina, she said thank you didn't you hear that. Sy sê dankie, hoekom moet ….

[ ]

They kept on shouting and later on I went to the two ladies why why did you say I must do that. Yes Tlaletso, because they kept on because they think they are superior so you must always…don't do that again.

So when I came back from Australia 1999 I taught my kids, no one is going to do this again ….[class responds with noise…]

So I agree with [name of learner] our parents never taught us. Mine I told them and I said to them you must always chin up when you talk to anybody, chin up and be bold. Hi Mam how are you Mam. You must be bold . Because this business of bowing down, people are taking you for granted.

Some agreement from the class. Yes yes.

Teacher T: …[ ] so I learned in a hard way.

Learner: The other day I was speaking to my father. And I was complaining about [ ] …

He was looking down and said "You are not supposed to look me in the eye".
Relates her discussion with her father [drowned out by noise in the class]

Teacher T: Our cultures differ and there are still parents who are telling that I am not going to talk to you especially fathers…

Lesson ends.

APPENDIX X

PAR STAGE 6: Interview Guide: semi-structured one-to-one interviews

Conducted November 2008.

This interview guide was based on transcripts of the focus group discussions that constituted the PAR workshops, the observations at the two schools and post-observation meeting on the 17th September.

1. Based on our discussions since we started this project, and the work schedule structure received from the GDE, how do you think you could improve on the way in which you position religion education in your LO programmes?

2. What have you learned from being involved in this COP that you did not learn from being in the cluster?

3. What do you think you could take out of this experience to strengthen your colleagues at your school?
   Probe questions: Do you work as a team or do you work independently?

4. How conscious are other LO educators at your school of the developmental nature of the LO curriculum and therewith the need for educators to plan together?

5. Do you think you could take something of what you have gained from this project to the cluster? If so, what do you think you could take to the cluster, if not, please explain why.

6. Will you make a point of talking to colleagues who deal with the same or similar topics?

7. What do you think you have learned from the other participants in the research group?

8. What do you think your situation presents in particular that others in your cluster from another context could learn from you? (In other words, what could colleagues In other schools in different kinds of contexts learn from you? Example – 'cultural' make-up of your school; religious affiliation of learners in your school; religious affiliation of your colleagues)

9. What do you think you could take from the lessons taught in the participant observation phase to generate learning opportunities for your learners?

10. Have you read the manual that was given to you?

11. Have you referred to it at all in planning your lessons? Why or why not?

12. How useful is a manual like this? (Support materials)
    What do you think of the way in which the religions have been set out?
    What do you think is lacking from this manual given your particular context?
    What kinds of information do you think you would like to see included in teacher guides for religion education?
    What do you think the text books which you know of contribute towards understanding religious diversity?

In what ways are Life Orientation text books limited in capturing religious diversity? (In retrospect, given our discussions through the year)

13. Did you have any spontaneous comment or feedback from your learners after your participant observation lessons? If so what kinds of comments?

14. How would you rate what you did for the participant observation lessons?

15. Think back over the 8 months or so that we have been busy - having perused all the interview and discussion group transcripts, could you identify any point, experience, interaction etc that has made a particular impact on you? Motivate or elaborate.

APPENDIX XI
PAR STAGE 6 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS: FULL TRANSCRIPTS

PAR STAGE 6 Full interview transcript: Phumzile

Date: November 2008.
Site: School B

(You should respond in the light of the discussions which we have had over the 8 months, even if you think you will be repeating yourself)

RF: Based on our discussions since we started this project, and the work schedule structure received from the GDE, how do you think you could improve on the way in which you position religion education in your LO programmes?

Phumzile: I believe time for LO must be increased 3 periods per week is clearly not enough. And then again when it comes to Learning outcome 2 citizenship education I think religion must be positioned more than twice because when you speak of values even if it's constitutional values those values are definitely covered by all religions. So religion is the source for all these values.

RF: What values were you thinking of?

Phumzile: Forgiveness which is a biblical value respect is a biblical value, love is the main one in religion

RF: Ok …ok so should we move onto quest. 2

What would you say you have learned from being involved in this project that you did not learn from being in the cluster?

Phumzile: In the cluster we do not have the experience of reflecting on your teaching. So in this project I had the opportunity of going deep into the issues of the subject. In the cluster most of our discussions centred around complying with the policy directives so hence we didn't have time to talk about our practice.

RF Have you had a cluster meeting recently

Phumzile: Mm, In term 4 we did not have any. The last one in term 3 it was chance for moderation.

RF: OK so even then you still didn't look at the issue of practice.

Phumzile: Not at all.

RF: What do you think you could take out of this experience to strengthen your colleagues at your school?

Phumzile: Mmmm, I think since we are all in to the teaching of the subject it is important that we must come together and bounce ideas with one another. So we must make time for reflection on our experiences in the class so we can assist one another as to how best to go about the subject.

RF: So I am just going to jump a little ahead. Does this mean that you haven't really been talking to each other up until now? Have you been doing your own thing or have you been talking to each other in terms of your planning and preparation?

Phumzile: I think at school we are expected to come together and talk about it, but this year it …I had the misfortune of teaching Grade 12 alone as a result I did not have any colleague of mine teaching the same thing, therefore I had very little discussions with my head especially because the subject at Grade 12 that is LO at Grade 12 was new so the head of the department himself did not did not have the experience of teaching LO in Grade 12 so I must say ……my experience of sharing ideas with my colleagues was highly limited.

RF: I guess that was everybody's problem this year, because it was Grade 12 Life Orientation for the first time.

Phumzile: Yes, yes. But where we have more than one teacher in the same grade there is that chance of talking to one another.

RF: ok
Ok, so with that answer in mind, the 4th question…

How conscious are other LO educators at your school of the developmental nature of the LO curriculum and therewith the need for educators to plan together?

Phumzile: I think the LO educators we agree that LO is important it teaches our learners life skills it helps our learners with choice of a career and therefore the subject is very important for the learners and where possible we do plan together, especially for planning together the tasks that the learners are going to do when the learners are going to write a test we plan the tests together

RF: Ok and where the religion assessment standards are concerned? Have you ever discussed those AS together?

Phumzile: As I said in 2008 I never had the opportunity.

RF: Do you think you could take something of what you have gained from this project to the cluster? If so, what do you think you could take to the cluster?

Phumzile: Yes. I think definitely….[ ] I think it is important that this community of practice should not only be experienced at school level but it will also be very helpful to the educators at the cluster level, to bounce against one another about the subject. I believe it's the only way in which we can identify [ ] of you know
the subject when we bring our heads together.

RF: Will you make a point of talking to colleagues who deal with the same or similar um..in future years? (Phumzile may not be teaching in 2009, because he is taking study leave).

Phumzile: In future..actually since we are new in the subject we are all struggling with confidence so it's very important to tap on each other for experiences you know from each other's strengths.

RF: It's a pity you're going to study next year so do you think you will try to impart some of what you know now before you leave?

Phumzile: I'm looking forward to it
It's funny I'm going but I don't feel like I'm going. I feel like I'm a teacher I was meant to be a teacher and I will remain a teacher . (chuckles) It's like you know I love teaching even more now that I am leaving…you know….[ ]

RF: It won't be forever though

Phumzile: I don't know what the future holds but I see myself one way or the other again acting as a teacher. (chuckles)

RF: I'm sure you will return…

RF: What do you think you have learned from the other participants in the research group? Namely Tlaletso and Rochelle even though Rochelle had to leave us. But what do you think you have learned from them?

Phumzile:I think our experiences are not exactly the same you know our approach, the teaching of LO the way the subject is allocated to educators is not the same and then the profile of our learners is different you know. In the case of Tlaletso there was more diversity and then in our case diversity is something that is theoretical you know we can only talk about the other people who we don't have a direct experience of them.

RF: Can you just elaborate on that…do you mean in terms of …um…

Phumzile: Diversity of religions…

RF: Diversity of religions.

Phumzile: Ja, my learners they can only talk in terms uh of Christianity ..

RF: OK. But what about Islam? I was just intrigued when that one boy who confessed to us in the class that he had converted to Islam. Do you find that because of Azaadville not being very far away, do you find that Islam could be something more concrete that the learners can discuss and investigate?

Phumzile: I am not sure. (chuckles) I must be honest, I am not sure because you know what about [ ] Some of the learners see those hats that is worn by Muslims.
Because they are in the minority that tend to hide that background of theirs. As a result it is still very difficult to see the impact of Islam or to feel it in our discussions

RF: So it's still mostly Christianity?

Phumzile: Ja, ……all the others in the minority no Jews…

RF: So all the other religions are mostly going to be discussed in the abstract
And so then just to verify in terms of the churches which are the churches that are still most influential here in this part?

Phumzile: The Christian churches in general and then that information of mine..

RF: Is that the document that you gave me

Phumzile: Yes. What I noticed about the statistics I gave you the Zionists are there in numbers but they are not necessarily a dominant factor. They are not a dominant factor.

RF: Is that the Zionist Christian Church?

Phumzile: The Zionist Christian Church, then you have these uh..you have the Pentecostals, you have these born agains, you know the born again Christians they call them the evangelical..but again the issue of religion does not come that much may be because the educator himself is not that much into religion (chuckles). It's unlike in Tlaletso's class obviously religion will come

because of her background. But in my case, I regard myself as having very little information (chuckles again)…

RF: And now that you've been exposed..do you think that in future you will take on religion more seriously?

Phumzile: Ja, especially up to our experience of xenophobia. That's when we realise that it's important to ……otherwise it leads to unnecessary conflict
and then suspicion of one another to dispel those suspicions I think we must tap into the religious diversity that is there in our communities, in our environment.

RF: What do you think your school or community context presents in particular that others in your cluster from another context could learn from you? (In other words, what could colleagues in other schools learn from you?) What do you think this school offers to others?

Phumzile: I think it's the brand of Christianity the brand in the context of an African culture. Mmm, you know…the impact of Christianity to people of African origin or the understanding of Christian teaching. I am sure that's what we offer this side…and then learners with a different cultural background will offer the same Christianity in a different context. You see the lines between culture and religion are so blurred sometimes they don't realise they are crossing into culture itself.

RF: Mmm….and maybe that's why in that lesson when you asked them about cultural issues or religious issues, when you asked them about African tradition they couldn't answer you because for them it was a cultural issue and they couldn't identify …Christianity is a religion and being African is the culture (Phumzile: is something else…yes..).

RF: Ok umm…so you taught a couple of lessons for me that I observed. So what do you think you could take from the lessons taught in the participant observation phase to generate learning opportunities for your learners?

Phumzile: What can I take?

RF: From what you did there …yes.. to generate further lessons or further learning opportunities around issues of religion and culture.

Phumzile: I noticed in that lesson that my learners knew pretty little about other religions. So it's important that the learners must be you know introduced sufficiently on the teachings of the other religions so that they must look at religion..uh Christianity as a religion amongst other religions and not necessarily as superior religion to other religions. So in short my learners need more knowledge of other religions….so they can learn to be tolerant.

RF: Whose going to be taking Grade 12's next year?

Phumzile; I think it's going to be the head of the department and the one colleague. They were teaching ….

RF: Ok so we were talking about what you think you could take from the lessons that you taught from the observation phase to generate learning opportunities
for your learners. And then you said your learners know pretty little about other religions so you think you would like to increase that to get them to understand religion (mistake by interviewer) as a religion amongst other religions that Christianity is not superior they need more knowledge about the other religions.
SO even if it's in the abstract it's not a bad thing even if you never meet someone who belongs to a particular religion, is that what you're saying?

Phumzile: Yes.

RF: ok, is there anything else you would like to say in relation to that question?

[Pause]

What about the religion and culture? What do you think you could take out of those few comments that those learners made in those lessons? Um in future learning experiences when you return to teaching one day? Or to advise your colleagues?

Phumzile: (Long pause)

Because mainly we are talking about Christianity I think the learners they need to see religion not only as you know the Bible the teachings of the Bible not only especially the Old Testament even the New Testament, that this thing the teachings they are actually in a context of a cultural experience of the ancient communities and therefore…..(Pause – as if looking for the right words)

RF: Are you talking about the actual Biblical text needing to understand that those were in the context of an ancient …..

Phumzile: (fills in) community

RF: ok

Phumzile: (Continues)… and then they must understand that those things those teachings ne, you know what make it relevant to their time, you know, to life modern day times basically to understand the constraints of the time you know that the development …communties were not as developed as today's communities. And then the teachings were largely a response to the experiences of those times and therefore religion must be understood in context.

RF: ok

Phumzile: Really struggle to make a point there (chuckles)

RF: But I think a lot can come out of that especially in terms of how the constitution is interpreted alongside religious belief um because a lot of people think the constitution is bad…that the Constitution because it wasn't made by God that people can actually not abide by it …so I think may be what you are saying is quite important if we take into consideration how people interpret biblical texts or any..Islamic texts or anything alongside the (pause)

Phumzile: the issues

RF: ja, ja the issues in the Constitution.

Phumzile: mmm mmmm

RF: Ok so um Question 11 the manual I was referring to was that and have you managed to read

Phumzile: I did..

RF: And um..

Phumzile: It's not easy but I did..I've reading about Islam, reading about Judaism about Hinduism…these are very complex, complex the teachings…complex religions ..especially to a person who is not used to these religions

RF: so you found the contents quite complex?

Phumzile: Yes..by complex I mean I did not understand everything but I think they were helpful.

RF: So what do you think you would need to be able to understand?

Phumzile: I would love (said with passion) to engage a person whose practicing these religions uh..one on one and then I'm sure I will get a clearer understanding of
the…

RF: of the religions?
Phumzile: yes..of the religions.

RF: and if you had to engage with members of the cluster or members of …or other members of staff …..members of….. Do you think collaboration around the issues could also be a possibility?

Phumzile: There is no doubt about that ja it would help

RF: Because the thing is I have written all of that and I'm not practising really in any of those..

Phumzile: Yeah

RF: Which is something I think we all end up doing ..we all end up writing and teaching when we are not insiders ..so that's very much an outsider's perspective that you find in there ..um…so you might find that insiders might challenge some of what I have written, because of how they experience it, which would also be useful to you.

Phumzile: Especially you'll find that amongst the Christians we don't have a 100% common understanding of Christianity

RF: Exactly…

Phumzile: So you can imagine among the Muslims it's the same thing…among the Jews the same thing.. there will be those areas where there is a debate…you know

RF: yes…

Phumzile: of the issues

RF: Which is not a bad thing actually it's how we learn hey?

Phumzile: Yes ..we can only make do with what we have.

RF: So did you have time to refer to what I had written in any of your lessons…or not really?

Phumzile: (Long Pause) mmmmm.

Let me be honest because the lessons were very short…for that particular lesson that I did it was not really necessary at the time

But in a way …in a way they contributed to my understanding and during the lesson I was slightly more knowledgeable than the learners (chuckles) because of the assistance that I got.

RF: So it did help you to understand

Phumzile: Yes….RF: to have a better understanding or did you deal with that particular lesson…

RF: ok so um it comes back to the question: How useful do you think a manual like this is?

Phumzile: umm (pauses)

RF: If you think of the textbooks…if you think of the textbooks and what you've got out of the textbooks how useful do you think a manual like this is and you can be critical you don't have to be…

Phumzile: If it was possible I think I could have reproduced the manual for my learners I think it could have helped them a lot. They needed the knowledge in the manual as well and you could see the way they were engaging with the questions that they did not have the benefit of the information in the manual.

RF: So for a long term study you think a manual like that could be useful to the learners as well.

Phumzile: Exactly

RF: And in terms of the accessibility of the language? Because obviously I am a first language English speaker so I am going to write from that point of view. Would the language need to be simplified or do you think the language is easy enough?

Phumzile: I don't think the problem is the language …

RF: ok

Phumzile: I think the problem is the concepts in the religions

RF: The concepts, Ok that's useful. SO what do you think could be added to this manual to make the concepts more accessible to educators as well as learners?

Phumzile: I think over and above the manual we also need to once you know invite a practising Muslim come and engage a practicing Muslim you know …do the same with a Hindu so that we can have a clearer understanding …we cannot just rely on the manual

RF: mm mmm

Phumzile: Because we might even misinterpret some of the concepts

RF: And someone like myself?

Phumzile: uhm (takes time to think about this)

RF: Someone who studies religions …someone like myself …someone who is a university lecturer would that be as useful, could that be as useful?

Phumzile: Ja, in the absence of a practising person, a lecturer, sure. It will help.

RF: But it just needs some kind of guidance?

Phumzile: Like I said in the first point, the issues here is time..you see this information, but uh the time. Do we really have the time to do justice?

RF: mmm, the whole issue is time.

Phumzile: Yes

RF: in terms of your in-service training as well as what goes on in a classroom?

Phumzile: mm..

RF: ok (pause) just to stick on the manual for a little while – just in terms of the way that the religions have been set out…how useful did you find that? Using the idea of dimensions, historical background, sacred texts, space places, sacred time.
Did you find that useful …or..

Phumzile: Yes, it was…I think it was useful. I think the manual tried its best you know to give us a picture of what is going on in the religions.

RF: Is there anything that you found lacking … on the one side you found the layout useful but is there anything that you found lacking to make the religions more accessible? You are not always going to have someone around many teachers don't always have the time to sit in the presence of someone who is a practitioner or even with someone who is a religious studies scholar. So is there anything that you think could be added to contribute towards clarification, understanding …

Phumzile: (Pauses) uhh maybe the visuals ne, relating to these concepts…if these concepts could be on video or recorded. I am sure it will assist

RF: Video material ?

Phumzile: Yeah

RF: I tried to do a bit by giving you the disc, but not everyone's got (data computer hardware) …I don't know if you've been able to look at that?

Phumzile: Again, the disc only has the pictures.

RF: Yes only the pictures, so something actual, so in video material

Phumzile: Yes, yes (in agreement)

RF: Ok that's useful. OK….ummm….

Did you have any spontaneous comment or feedback from your learners after your participant observation lessons?

Phumzile: Unfortunately the timing of our participant observation lesson was such that after that lesson we did not have any periods, any LO periods because they were going straight into their preliminary exams. I think they were only interested to know what do you think of them, what do you think of what they were trying to do in the lesson. And then I had to assure them that no you were very impressed

RF: Which I was ..I think it would have been so nice if we could have done that religion and culture lesson, African tradition..

Phumzile: Yes,

RF: Anyway it will have to be another time.

Phumzile: Yes..

RF: How would you rate what you did for the participant observation lessons?

Phumzile: Umm, I think it was fair, the objective of the lesson was achieved but obviously there is always room for improvement . I would like to improve especially the manner in which time was handled during the period you know and the background knowledge to the topic and then maybe

…..even the questions I think the questions were a little bit complicated for the learners. It was not easy for them to always understand exactly what was asked.

RF: But that could be because they didn't have much background ..if they had had other lessons and this had been sort of at the end or somewhere in a series of lessons. Because you threw this at them quite randomly.

Phumzile: Yes and again I think that the problem was that remember they were given those questions in advance and then they expected that we were going to have enough time and that they were going to read from their responses. Unfortunately it was not like that (Chuckles)..

RF: Yeah.. So is you think over the 8 months or so that we have been busy and having perused all the interview discussion group transcripts could you identify any point, experience or interaction that has made a particular impact on you? Is there anything in this whole series of discussions that we have been involved in that has made a particular impact on you?

Phumzile: You know I really marvelled at the background knowledge of my colleagues during the discussions and then I realised that my background knowledge was not as good as my colleagues background knowledge.

RF: Meaning Tlaletso and Rochelle?

Phumzile: Tlaletso and Rochelle yes (in agreement)

RF: And what kind of knowledge was it that you were impressed with?

Phumzile: Uhm…They had a much more indepth knowledge of uh religion.

Because of their training because they are both trained in religion.

RF: Yeah, that true. Although they studied in theology they had diverse religions in the background as well ja. They did.

And then is there anything else. Is there anything else that sort of stands out for you?

Phumzile: (Pause) The idea of the Community of practice. You know…it was new to me and then I came to realise how important it is to me in my practice. I am not alone ..it will be very very beneficial to me to be exposed the other colleagues in a COP (long pause)… but the other thing that came out also about this thing is to realise how our learning outcome on citizenship.. you know… how it…you know the focus on religion was very scanty. If you look at that thing…at the centre…if you look at that learning outcome….at the centre it's actually discrimination and human rights not religion as such ..you see…

RF: umm…

Phumzile: so to me it's like .. what is that…what do you call it? Our learning outcome …the way it is phrased here it is like.. the focus is not really on religion

RF: You mean the wording of it?

Phumzile: Yes..it's actually on human rights and diversity,…you see?

And this diversity is not necessarily on religious diversity it's diversity in general. So until we met with you I did not even see religion in that outcome. (chuckles) pause…

RF: Unless you read the rest of the uh..the uh…

Phumzile: The Manifesto..

RF: Yes, the Manifesto…or the National Curriculum Statement not so because if you look at …

Phumzile: Actually that copy that I lost on the policy of religion, it was that policy of religion which shows us the intention but unfortunately in the work schedule or the statement it is not prominent it is not prominent.

RF: I suppose it then depends on how well you study up the national documents, the national policies

(Brief discussion on lost policy document)

RF: Ok so before we finish this there are just a few things - there were some comments that you made in previous group sessions and we might have covered some of these. One of the things you said in particular is that we need information on indigenous religions. My question to you is: Where do you think you need guidance in terms of gaining information on indigenous religions?

Does it come back to that idea of knowing where culture begins and ends and religion begins and ends?

Phumzile: Yes,

RF: Another comment that you made is the relationship between religion and culture. You were keen to look at the relationship between religion and culture.

Phumzile: uh-uh

RF: So what could you say are the problems then between ***religion*** and ***culture*****,** that your learners have or even your own colleagues in understanding the difference between religion and culture?

Phumzile: Humm..yeah for the learners it is very difficult to understand in fact we see the difference between religion and culture to them it's …no no…in fact they see them as separate not one and the same thing. Hence when they were asked do you know of African religions they were not aware of that because they see culture as culture and religion as religion and that both of them it's a way of life. You see when you are converted to a religion there are those things in your culture that you bring with you into that religion and that has been the experience of all the people in the history of that thing.

But maybe coming to the question, I should say …what is the question again?

RF: Where do you need guidance …that part.

Phumzile: (Long …pause)

The question it's not …it rings very differently in my head now.
The guidance..where can the guidance come from or the assistance ?

RF: Or where …well those are two different questions
Where do you think the guidance …that's a good question too …where do you think the guidance could come from and what kind of guidance do you think you need? Pause…

So let's go back to that idea..where do you think the guidance could come from?

Phumzile: Maybe…maybe ….the learners where should also learn about the cultures of the people that are mentioned in the religions. For example the Muslims they should also be given the cultures of the …

Interruption….interview pauses and resumed

RF: Ok so you were saying it is important to learn about the cultures of the people within the religions.

Phumzile: Yes..

RF: So when it comes down to indigenous religions and cultures

Phumzile: (Repeats thoughtfully) indigenous religions and cultures ?

RF: By indigenous religions we mean African traditional religions. It will be useful to learn about Zulu culture, Tswana culture

Phumzile: Yes…

RF: What do you think?

Phumzile: Ja

Phumzile: Let's look at it this way.
When we have this people, what do we call it…these Shembe people in the KZN. What you see about that church is that their teachings are greatly influenced by the experience of the Zulus not an interpretation of their religion is related to that.
You go to the to the other Christians like the Catholics, Anglicans again if you look at the lives of the people there what you will see is that they live according to what the Bible is teaching but at the same time they did not throw away the beliefs the African traditional beliefs so there is this attempt to combine Christianity with what the forefathers used to do. And then if you go to the African traditional churches that is where it is more pronounced, it's even more pronounced. You will notice that they interpret the Bible according to the African way of living. Unfortunately most of the services are held at night most of these African traditional churches they hold their services at night and then they will do this thing through the night you know they have their own services …..things in the night I remember I attended one and I was really surprised at what I saw there at one stage you know it was in the early hours of the morning now people were prophesying now they will come to you and tell you now and begin to prophesy you know and then that was very strange to me and then it's funny how many churches there are among the people in the community it's not like it's one church there are many churches. You know these churches are not like the Anglican church where it's the Anglican church in Randfontein is the same as the Anglican church in Johannesburg and so forth these one's it's like they are centred around the priest. You know it's like they belong to different…they have their owners who happens to be the bishops and the priests in those churches. It's more like the court, the court in Randfontein will be not be the same as the court in Johannesburg so in their churches as well but they also have their own conferences where these churches come together especially during funerals of the priest when a priest has died that's when now the priests from these different African traditional churches they will come together to bury of them but not necessarily of the same church, you know? That's what I realised about them

RF: Do you find that some of these churches still continue to practice animal sacrifice?

Phumzile: ummm. I think there's a lot of that. I think there is a lot of that you see I think there is a lot of that in African culture this communication with the ancestors. They do that using the blood of the animals therefore an animal must be slaughtered and then an animal what will happen and then they will declare…you know what they do they will bring a sheep before the sheep is slaughtered then they will talk to the ancestors and then the sheep will be slaughtered so the use of animals you know it's not that the animal will be burnt on the stake but the blood of the animals you know is there with the communication of the spirit.
RF: ok I think that's it.

PAR STAGE 6 Full interview transcript:
Tlaletso

Date: November 2008.
Site: Tlaletso's Home

(You should respond in the light of the discussions which we have had over the 8 months, even if you think you will be repeating yourself)

RF: Based on our discussions since we started this project, and that work schedule structure received from the GDE, do you remember that work schedule
Tlaletso: You mean the one we were trained with the NCS?

RF: how do you think you could improve on the way in which you position religion education in your LO programmes?

Tlaletso: MMM, Firstly what I can do there is to introduce a way of communicating with learners not through papers like in the NCS you know because there is a lot of paper work that we have to do you know stressing that you must have the LO's SA's you know of which they are taking much time than if I was talking to the learners you know communicating with them getting their views what do you think of religion in the schools what's your opinion about this it's far different from that now we have to concentrate on planning this and then talking to the learners they must know the LO's, the AS you know and I think it's consuming a lot of time than if you were doing it with the children in a discussion form it will be far better and kids would learn and understand how to tolerate and accept the others people of different religions than they have.

RF: So are you saying that you would rather go broader than what is suggested by the AS'S? Is that what your're saying?

Tlaletso: Yes that's exactly it ja.

RF: Do you find that (AS) they might be a bit narrow?

Tlaletso: Mm, ja. It closes the children to be open in their thinking you know it's like the OBE it's making them to do what we want them to do but not what they can do or what they can offer to us as teachers or educators but we are forcing them to do just what we are teaching them

RF: And in terms to the time assigned to that second outcome on citizenship education what do you think about religion in relation to that particular outcome?

Tlaletso: I think because the time it's so limited because Life Orientation we don't have enough periods you know we are given three periods per week or per cycle sometimes a cycle is 7 days and then we feel with those periods it is very difficult to get something out of it it's a bit of a problem.

RF: But now that we've been working together for these past 8 months can you see yourself doing more than you probably would have done without having the time together ?

Tlaletso: Yes, yes I could've done a lot of things for instance the periods that I had the hours that you spent with me in the class there even after the kids were saying: 'Ma'am can't we go back to our discussion, Ma'am it was so nice, please Ma'am can't you go back to …' you know to show that they've got a lot but they don't have the time to open up. I'm rushing to get portfolio files you know I'm rushing you know to get the work done for this time I should have done this so we don't have time to discuss. Every time even if we wanted to I keep on saying: 'Uh uh don't forget you must write you must write because I have to produce the time is coming I must have your portfolio work ….no, no, no, no we're not going to discuss', so I'm closing them out. All

the ideas that they had, the wonderful ideas that they had to discuss and then we can speak about this religion in a broad way.

RF: That's actually very useful. ok, so the second question, maybe you've even answered some of this already.

What have you learned from being involved in this project that you did not learn from being in the cluster?

Tlaletso: That is the openness of giving the children the opportunity to talk just let's forget about writing let's talk. Let me get your views let me understand what you want you know and that has made them to be so open that some of the things that we are not even aware of came in like politics. Some of them they say : 'Ma'am we understand that we can tolerate this and tolerate that what about this affirmative action? We are locked in so it means we are studying here with our fellow brothers here in the same class black and white in the same class but the next thing when I am going to get work I'm not going to get it my friend is going to get it but we are sitting in the same class. What's the difference? It's just the same as with our religion we are in the same class we are tolerating one another in the same class. I know that this one is a Muslim this one is a Christian in a way this one is.. but we tolerate one another but when we go out to look for a job we are different people we are completely different people and some of the matric boys were so depressed in so must that one said to me you know what Ma'am I feel like if I had something I can kill the government as a whole. I said who is the government? Who is the government, I am also the government because I am black so you want to kill me too? Ma'am it's because you know, Ma'am I'm worried my parents don't have money to take me to school next year as I pass my matric. And at the same time when I am looking for a job who is going to hire me, nobody is going to hire me and Ma'am you always say we must pray. You know he was even on me to say you always say as Christians we must pray these people don't care for our prayers Ma'am we are, we are …He was angry, he was bitter. Because I will always say, If you've got problems just give them to God, you know God understands us and He knows us…
He says: God won't understand affirmative action you know because I'm going to work next year whose going to give me a job because I'm white ma'am.
Eh, I was in trouble I thought uhm prayer this time is not going to work.

RF: And then in terms of the religion education what would you say you have learned from being in this project that you didn't learn from being in the cluster ?
Other than the talking and the openness what would you say in terms of the religion per se that you've learned from the project that you haven't learned from the cluster?

Tlaletso: It's just that like I always say I have tolerance for all these other things but this project has made me to realise I was on the right track so I am emphasising it now now recently I am really emphasising it moreover children would say If I am gay you remember the discussion we had (referring back to participant observation lesson) know that child made me to have so much compassion whereas I used to say Aag these gay people God did not create Adam and Eve (corrects herself) Adam and Steve I would pass those remarks but later I realised uh-uh I shouldn't be saying those things I have to refer to these people in the correct way.

(House phone rings - so interview interrupted, then resumes)

So as I was saying that it has taught me you know to emphasise now to take this very seriously and to be strong on it that I must have tolerance and uh it is important because sometimes you take it for granted to say no the Word of God it is teaching me that I must have tolerance but it shouldn't be a light thing like that I must emphasise it more and more and know that this is very important and I have to encourage my learners to know that this is a serious issue we shouldn't take it lightly to say Ah Ma'am how can I hate somebody when we are in the same class we have to take it seriously to say we differ in religion and that shouldn't make us to be enemies and that shouldn't you know make us to not love one another or to criticise one another or to point a finger at one another. We need to be one and show one another that we have to be one at all times.

RF: So what do you think you could take out of this experience to strengthen your colleagues at your school? So in other words what changes do you think you could make in terms of how religious diversity is dealt with in your school?

Tlaletso: Well in our school I think the thing is even if there are those who are not Christians they don't show up they don't show up they are just quiet I remember we have got two Indians but they are refusing they are saying they are not Muslims. One even came with a rosary to show me that he is a Roman Catholic and then the girl said no I am a Roman Catholic too Ma'am I am not a a a….

RF: Are these learners or colleagues?

Tlaletso: They are learners. And then with my colleagues oh oh, they are these rigid Christians that believe so much in their own churches and other peoples' churches are not correct. You know they believe in that because of course the Afrikaners they grew up in ..they believe too much (with emphasis) in a prayer
they believe in a prayer most of the time. But they don't believe in you know teaching children to pray oh no no I don't know there's something we don't agree with because I remember we had our Christian..School Christian movement whereby we had a camp and in this camp I thought we are all Christians I wasn't aware that there are people who are different but being Christians I was not aware of that. But when we were at the camp fortunately I was not in charge I was just attending there because I am a teacher at Bekker and then it happened that when this guy was preaching he ended up praying praying for these children some of them were falling down and all that and then one of the children took her cell phone and phoned the parents and said man this is happening here and the parents said no way that's not what we believe in they came they started phoning other parents you know within the wink of an eye I I think I left at quarter to ten in the evening, because I was coming home it was on a Friday and then this lady that I am working with she phoned me to say hey what's wrong the parents are here to fetch their children.

"Why?" (Tlaletso - with surprise)

"No they don't accept what is happening here.

What happened what did you do?

No this guy you left this guy when he was still preaching he started praying then he prayed for these children and some of them were falling and crying and then one phoned the parents the parents are full here they just want their children they say this must be cancelled and some of the parents are teachers that I am working with so I was puzzled and I was so eager I was anxious to say let it be the following day maybe I could get to the camp I could see what is happening and then they said the camp is cancelled the children went home that Friday evening about 11, 12ish. I was already home, and then on Monday I wanted to know, what happened it was bad. So and so came to fetch their child and then this one they started phoning other people what's wrong? This guy as he was praying the children were falling and that's they don't like. I couldn't understand and then later at school as we continue with the CSV (Afrikaans pronunciation) they call it CSV in Afrikaans we wanted to do our yearly plan and then some people decided to volunteer: "No we want to come in" and these are the people when we pray we normally like holding hands that's I find them doing that at school so then we hold hands some of these people never hold hands because they say they don't understand why why should we hold hands and then as I was explaining to one of them I said: "This I found you doing it here I don't know what you hold hands and then the boys they hold on the shoulders like that and the girls. I said I don't know I came here and found this as your tradition but according to the Word of God it says where two or three agree on anything on earth in heaven it is being agreed to. When they refuse anything on earth even in heaven it is refused. ….

Long story about disagreements and differences in denominations.

When we wanted to choose a leader wew (whistles) it was a sensitive thing everybody said no we want to be involved we are going to come in. So think we are
eight or nine people who are involved now from next year. So we are not going to take anybody to the camp …You know it's like we don't tolerate one another we are having the same Bible - we still have "My church doesn't do the way your churches do so that thing is still there. I don't know we'll see next year what's going to happen because we haven't planned anything for next year because we've got 8 people at [?}

RF: 8 people in Life Orientation ?

Tlaletso: No in CSV. 8 have volunteered to come in. Because we don't agree with what is happening in CSV. They want to bring their own church

RF: Now this is interesting from a Life Orientation point of view. So how do you think that will influence the way the religion bits are done in Life Orientation if they have their particular ways of looking at Christianity? How does that impact on Life Orientation?

Tlaletso: I think it's going to have a really big impact because the majority of learners are Afrikaner and then the English learners well they believe they are Christian and when you talk of the Bible they just listen to you, they accept but these others would say: Nee juffrou ons doen dit nie so nie. Nee juffrou dit werk nie so nie.Nee juffrou die kultuur is so so so you know? Now if teachers are going to be involved maybe bringing in that kultuur of theirs it is going to affect us in the classes because we are mixed it's not Afrikaans only it's not English only, it's both in. Like there was a Jewish boy always when I talk he'll say Ma'am why do you always talk of God in Life Orientation? And I would say, you know what that's the character that's my character I feel God is the creator He is everything so if something is difficult don't think it's difficult because before God nothing is difficult he can see you through so that is why I believe every time when I talk to you I will always say: God is there for you. God has got no favourites he loves us the same if you've got this problem he will see you through. Because now we are discussing about our careers we talk of careers now you think I don't know what is going to happen to me because I don't have money to go to school and this and that and that now I'm saying to you we are talking of careers this is careers, but I believe God can see you through because you want to be a better person you want to see yourself having the best career on earth that's what you want and if you can just trust God and take away your eyes from your parents God can make you get that career that you want that's why I'm talking of God otherwise I wouldn't have spoken of God.
"Ja Ma'am it's just these things you know we differ and I feel we shouldn't be talking of God. What if there are kids who don't believe in God. And I said if they don't believe in God they will have to believe in God as I'm talking. It's like I'm telling them that God can do wonders God can do miracles so I'm pulling them in that they shouldn't hang on the fence not knowing where to stand. They must know, at least even if I don't believe there is a God who can do great things. If I can get to this God or if I can get to know this God then my things will be ok, because now some of them they don't know where to cry to. If the parents can't they think it's the end of the world they don't know that God can make a miracle that they can get a bursary then the next thing they are in university the next thing they are qualified as doctors they are qualified without even getting a cent from their parents that can happen.

RF: So what you are talking about is very faith based. How do you think you can stand back from your faith in order to do justice to what this boy was saying, the diversity, the religious diversity and the diversity in terms of how people think their opinions and so on? How do you think you can bring those things together because it's quite imposing for you to say well you know God this and God that? How do you think you can reconcile the idea of faith like you are talking from your perspective and religious diversity and tolerance which is learning about religions in Life Orientation?

Tlaletso: Like I said before that letting them to talk it helps a lot. Because as we are talking I want to get from him, if you say you are a Jewish or if you don't have anything what will you do where so

you go who do you ask. You say your parents can't afford and then they'll start talking they will start telling me, No Ma'am you know I don't believe in not having I believe in I will work for myself I'll go out I'll do this and I'll do that because he feels he is not going to get through anybody he is going to stand on his own even if the parents don't have money or whatever he will never stand and say God help me, he says Ma'am I will never, I have got hands and will stand up and I will make some ways and I've got brains to think I will think of another thing…so this brings me to the openness of allowing them to talk so they become free and so ok the Jewish people believe solely on working for them to be rich they must work. You don't sit there and wait and say God will do things for them.

RF: Ok so if we can just come back to… you said your colleagues are quite rigid in terms of their churches and so on, how many of those colleagues are involved with you in teaching Life Orientation ?

Tlaletso: Mmm, it's only one. The rest are teaching Grade 8 and they are not so much interested, like now we have already planned for next year, they have quit they are not going to teach Life Orientation. Others people are going to come in those who are going to take Grade 8, because I am going to take Grade 9, Grade 11 and Grade 12. So Grade 10 and Grade 8 is not going to be in my classes.

RF: So you have quite a lot of influence in Life Orientation, because most of your time table is Life Orientation?

Tlaletso: Ja mmm, so I've got a lot.

RF: I am going to leave Question 4, and then Question 5.
[Ques. 4 How conscious are other LO educators at your school of the developmental nature of the LO curriculum and therewith the need for educators to plan together?]

Do you think you could take something of what you have gained from this project to the cluster?

Tlaletso: To our cluster meetings?

RF: Mm

Tlaletso: Yes, definitely because I remember when I was at the cluster meeting I would always complain about why don't we talk to the department about this Life Orientation that many times its children's views or learners' views how can we test them on their own views? So why can't we talk to the department and say that we shouldn't test them, there mustn't be an examination so I can take it back to them and say, Man like I was saying it is not a good thing to have an examination on Life Orientation. Now here am I I'm saying kids must be given enough time to express themselves on this issue of religion how are they going to tolerate Zionists for an example, because with us we are Christians but we are so different and there are so many of us who are believing …but all of us we call ourselves Christians so how can our learners have tolerance on these people on those ones on those ones. All the religions how can we bring them together and tolerate one another and except one another with all that because as learners when you talk in class when you talk of Christianity some of them they will criticize, Yes Ma'am the ZCC people they are jumping where where in the Bible does it say we must jump? You know they will talk of all that and I will bring them down to say no, no, no, no this is a democratical (sic) country. Everybody has a right to his own religion, his own Christianity, his own beliefs it's correct, so you are not going to criticize them you have to accept them as they are. So we need to take this to the teachers and say "Let's give the children a chance to talk, let them talk. With this Life Orientation we shouldn't be concentrating on them to say "Write down!". When we talk for instance if you talk of citizenship there are a lot of things we can talk of citizenship of which these kids must know and we must make them practically, we must make practically to them that they must understand if let's say for instance like we are in a boarding school on a Sunday or on a Wednesday there is a church somewhere I must take my group to that church. They must go and experience what is happening there unlike talking

and reading or writing and reading it remains in their mind, it's vivid in their mind more than when they write it down and shelve it there. They were just doing it to get marks when you ask them it's gone, they've forgotten but if somebody is speaking you will be surprised later when you ask them "Yes Ma'am I experienced this I went there I saw this I saw that". You remember that girl how she was speaking to show that she went to that place and she knows what she was talking about she was there. So if we allow them to be practical, to get to these places and see them experience them and be part of them or be part of the discussions there in those churches or with the youth of different….it will work.

RF: Don't you think it that is a bit difficult when you've got say ten or 12 classes you teaching to get them to go to places? Other than reading how else would they get the experience if they can't read?

Tlaletso: Umm it will be a bit difficult. Like I say we were intending to have leaders. Out of these leaders they are going to have their own group. This leader has got their group, this leader has got his group this leader and it's like for the whole school when we do that and then if I take the leaders lets say the leaders are ten and then they will come back with the experience they are going to give it to these ones but if we don't have time we want them to write we'll never have a chance to take even 10 leaders to go and do something because we won't have time to come back and plough back to the other learners so we can work on this or know about this.

RF: Don't you think it depends on what we are asking our learners to read and what we are asking them to write? I remember that you were asking your learners to hand in an assignment to you where they had done some research on a religion other than their own when I was there with you. Don't you think that doing an assignment like that is quite valuable in terms of *what* they are writing?

Tlaletso: It is it is important. It is important that they must also go out and make such a research and bring the information. When they bring if you divide them into groups this group can talk about what they have this group can talk about ….and then we will get the idea from them as they present their topics of their work in class. SO the whole class will benefit. And then if anybody has a question, how did you come to that, why do they do this, then questions will come in and will help here and there to …and it will be sort of a discussion but with 30 minutes or 45 minutes a period after 7 days you can't do it.

RF: So when you say you are not really for them writing what kinds of things what kinds of writing are you not happy with? What's making you say that? Because you've said it to me often. What's making you say (pause)…

Tlaletso: (fills in) they shouldn't write?

RF: Yes

Tlaletso: It's because of…Life Orientation it's like…it's an experience …

RF: ok I hear that, but what kinds of things are they writing that you don't like that they are writing?

Tlaletso: No it's not that I don't like them writing or something that I don't like their writing. The thing is like they speak mostly about personal well-being how am I going to mark them wrong or right? [ ] wrong? If he says my eyes are green? I can't say now, even if I can see his eyes are not green they are blue. She says "I know myself Ma'am I know, look at myself in the mirror my eyes are green". It's an argument whereas it's a personal thing about how she feels. So with personal well-being it's their own opinion sometimes we say tell us about your career she's going to speak about what she likes what she went through or she has experienced. I want to be a vet ..I saw my aunt or I saw my neighbour…or I went to the surgery I know…she knows everything. How am I going to say you are wrong here?

RF: But don't you think it's not about saying she is wrong, but it's the quality? If you give the class an assignment to investigate whatever it is ..um.. and some people come back with three lines and others come back with a well-investigated piece, that's what we are looking at. Neither of them are wrong but the one has investigated more solidly and soundly than the others who have just managed to write three lines because they couldn't be bothered. Isn't that the difference maybe that we are looking at? Not whether they are wrong or right, but the quality

Tlaletso: (in the background)..what they have done…

RF: and the ability of managing to find the information in the first place?

Tlaletso: I think it's true what you are saying now we look at the quality what they can bring back and my problem is if they bring back all that information you can see this person went all out when searching for information, she's got a lot of information and the other one brings the key words and you have said the assignment is going to be let's say out of 50 or according to the rubric how much this one get and how much must that one get? Now the rubric itself is time consuming itself. I've read this and then I've got to read the rubric……..

But I must look at whether it corresponds with what they want. Hence I'm saying this is really time consuming. Sometimes if I want to mark it I would give a total mark but what about the rubric. I've got to go through the rubric and understand what the rubric says and what does it correspond well

RF: And the learners will the learners get the rubric before hand so they understand what they have to do?

Tlaletso: Yes most of the time when you give an assignment the rubric must be down there so as they know that I am going to be judged on this on this whatever research I'm going to do. It must have this and this and this and if I've got all of this I'm going to get my fifty…but most of the time they don't even look at the rubric. Most of the time you will give them an investigation go make a research about anorexia and then here is the rubric. You will still get whereby they have written an essay whereas the rubric says the colours must be bright, the headings must attract the eye and when you take something like this..Does it attract an eye? It has got nothing, but the rubric said so, so most of the time it's like you do a thing but they don't it according to the according to OBE you must give them a research or an assignment with a rubric they must know how they are going to be judged. We do it, I can give you my Grade 12 papers portfolio file. You will be shocked to see how they do their investigation and sometimes they say 11 pages. They must go and make a research of 11 pages Grade 12 and 11. 'Ma'am this Life Orientation it's wasting our time. We've got Maths, we've got this 11 pages no Ma'am and because they are complaining when they bring the papers in it's absolutely not what is in their assignment. They've got the page they've got the page with them but when they bring the assignment back it doesn't correspond with the page that they are having. It's like the majority of learners they don't have interest of reading because we give them something ordinary to read just to read.
'Ma'am what must we do here?', but you have given them assignment. But then they ask you what must we do here. And you didn't just give them assignment you looked at the book you went through the page or the exercise. To say yes, we are going to talk about healthy lifestyle. Healthy lifestyle

Long treatise on irrelevant tasks – need for learners to share and express themselves on topics relevant to their lives – sex, pregnancy, political issues.
"They must talk"…

RF: So in terms of what you are going to be doing next year do you think you will make a point of working with your colleagues in Life Orientation on topics to do with religion specifically? Can you see yourself…remember I showed you in the curriculum how the assessment standards are actually developmental, so can you see yourself working with your colleagues on your planning for next year in terms of dealing with religion specifically, never mind the pregnancy but religion education in particular.

Tlaletso: Definitely I will have to do that like already I have said it seems that we have a problem if we are going to leave it that way we are not going to work harmoniously.
We will have to come together and sit down and talk and I will educate them in what is happening with Life Orientation about the religion. We must tolerate one another for us to live peacefully and enjoying our lives we have to accept one another's religion. We shouldn't say this is your religion you want it this way because in your family this is how you do it and you want other people to

RF: When you say there is a problem, is it a problem of intolerance is that what you mean? Are you experiencing a problem of intolerance
Is it a problem of intolerance in your school? It sounds to me to be more amongst your colleagues rather than your learners.

Tlaletso: No the learners there is no problem.

RF: Because I was quite impressed when I was listening to the learners in classes and that wasn't just an act. So you're finding more amongst the colleagues ..

Tlaletso: And now recently I wasn't aware of ….

Long treatise on issues between the churches.

So that is why I saying there is a lot of work I have to do for next year to make them whoever is going to join me in Life Orientation they must have tolerance. They must know that we are not going to look at them as business people, as HOD's as principals, we are going to look at them as human beings created in the image of God

We are going to look at human beings created by God and then we are going to put in our diversity to say by the way you cannot own a business without me a person who must come and buy. So in other words you must accept me, you must tolerate me I am a human being like you are

RF: So you view religious diversity regardless of whether we are Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Christian we are all created in the image of God and therefore on those grounds…

Tlaletso: exactly we need to be respected.

RF: Ok that's brilliant.

Just going back to…we've worked mostly with Pule and we've had the privilege of working with Rochelle for a little while what would you say you've learned from the other members of this group probably including my involvement, when I say in the group, me included, but especially the others in the group? What would you say you've learned specifically or that has made an impact on you from the other members of the group?

Tlaletso: What I've learned especially from Rochelle was that she was very firm as a parent to her child when she was taught something that she didn't want she took a stand and said no I am not going to allow that. And that made me to learn something from her to say Man this woman stood for her child and stood for what they believe in because if she didn't do that probably her child would have another religion in the same house, the mother, the father and the child will have her own religion and I felt that was very strong of her. Because there is one thing with me I sometimes like to be lenient because I believe if there is heaven, if I want to go to heaven probably I am not going to go with my children or with my husband. SO whoever wants to do whatever it's up to them you know I've got that thing but ever since then I'm very strict, I don't allow that to my children to say, they'll say 'Ag mama man today we want to do our studies we are writing and blah blah and I'll say you can stay as long as you know where you stand being lenient to them to say you know…. And what I've noticed is that our learners or our children many a time as they grow up they follow

us as parents and when they reach a certain stage they start having tricks Mama I can't go to church today because I'm not feeling well and she stays whereas she is doing her own thing smoking dagga or whatever in the house, meditating because there is nobody she is free to do whatever. And I've learned from Rochelle I must go in to my children's rooms. I never used to, I would say Ag they're girls it's their room, it's their room and after I've seen Rochelle being so strict ….

Long treatise that doesn't relate to the line of questioning – answers very much from a faith perspective.

RF: I think what Rochelle was talking about specifically was the way in which a particular religion had been taught to her child and that's what made her worried because it sounded as if the religion was being presented as "The Truth" when she lives with another kind of "Truth" and I think that was what was worrying her so much. I was a bit sorry that she couldn't quite remember exactly what it was that her child had been taught, so I couldn't respond too much to that but it brings us back to practice classroom practice…um..when you talk about being tolerant or being…because there is a fine line between teaching different religions and being committed to your own faith. So what could you say about practice so that you keep those two things apart ?

Tlaletso: You know what I do most of the time they sometimes want to ask me some questions like they heard somebody saying Ma'am Roman Catholic is a cult and I said where did you get that from?

House phone rings – disturbs interview.

RF: What do you think your school or community context presents in particular that others in your cluster from another context could learn from you? But think specifically about the religious-cultural make-up of your school.

Tlaletso: I think maybe like we have already discussed I am intending to get these one's who are so rigid to know that we have to have tolerance for other people. We shouldn't forget that we are diverse. So like I said I would help my own colleagues
so I feel even those who are not at our school I would still preach that "Man we need to have that tolerance and we need to teach learners to tolerate other people of different religions and I will stress on that one because I think it is working for me
I think in my school or even in my life I will definitely stress it to other people in my community. Like you know now I have a chance because I am preaching in Krugersdorp, I am preaching in Randfontein Mohlakeng so in a way I'm not going to spread this only to teachers I'm also going to spread this to laymen ordinary women down there. They must understand if people are different from them they differ with religion they must accept them like I am doing. I mean when I was teaching at M… I was not even teaching we had a speaker that I had invited
to come and teach there but we had people from different churches we didn't say no only the charismatics because we are charismatic. No, we had the Methodists, we had the Anglican people. I think the Anglican people are the ones who organised this. By knowing me I always preach for them on Saturdays they invited me to be their speaker and I said no many a times you listen to me and I said no let's get to listen to different people that's why we had to invite Pastor P…and then I became the MC. So you can see I am trying to spread this tolerance for the fact that I said they must invite the Methodists, they must invite the ZCC they must invite all the Zionist Christian churches it was wonderful because we were from all different churches and whatever we were doing there even when Pastor P was preaching I could see because I was the MC when I stand up to comment or to say something I could see the one's in the blue uniform they were nodding to say yes they agree to what Pastor P was preaching. It excites me because it shows me that I am spreading the tolerance for the fact that we could come to together in our uniforms from our different churches but we came together. This shows me that I have already started to show people that we have to tolerate one another through this issue of tolerance and accepting one another from different religions.

RF: So you're becoming a kind of prophet of tolerance (laugh together).
What's interesting for me is that you are looking at your school community and also looking in terms of your faith community as well going beyond your own particular church background.

Tlaletso: Ja, ja…

RF: Ok. What do you think you could take from the lessons that you taught in the lessons for me in the next year's programme?

Tlaletso: Uuh…like I'm saying I'm already putting this into practice so it shows that next year in the new programme I will maybe do it even more. Stretch more than only to my colleagues at school level even to the two townships I am working between
I can stretch over to other townships you know or even to other people and other communities whereby they totally don't have the same belief that we have or the same religion that we have. I will still go there and show that we can tolerate one another and teach them to tolerate other people. We really have a problem coming to tolerance of other churches.

RF: Remember the manual I gave to you with the different religions and the disc? Have you had a look at that at all?

Tlaletso: With the pictures?

RF: Well I gave you the manual with all the religions Have you actually managed to have a look at that manual? Have you referred to that manual at all?

Tlaletso: The one in the purple file?

RF: The one that I gave you in the plastic folder, yes.

Tlaletso: Ja, I looked at it but not up until that far ….I think the few pages in front. I looked at them I read them. They were fascinating because most of them time I would love to take what was written on that of different religions .

RF: Umm..because the question really is would something like that be useful to you, or has it been useful to you?

Tlaletso: I think if I had to go through it the first few that I read it shows that that thing could be more useful than any other thing and especially like I'm saying I'm going all out so it could be of great help …you know…for me to get ideas how to do this how to do that you know getting to different people that I'm not used to or people that are not of my same religion

RF: And for your classroom for you planning of lessons in the classroom itself? Do you think you could find a use for it?

Tlaletso: Definitely I can use it even in my class. I can use it even in my class, because when I started that lesson that I did some of the points I looked at that manual and I could see I could use this I could use this for that.

RF: SO what do you think about the way in it was set out?
The way in which it was set out in terms of history, main beliefs and sacred time? What do you think of that sort of layout?

Tlaletso: The layout it's also….it's also ..to me it was ok. The way it was because I could look at this part …this religion ….and the marriages you know looking at all those….I think it's just if I get that if that's a way to get the whole information then I could tap in the internet and get a lot more information you know and use it …

RF: So you could see it as way to getting more information via the internet for example or other sources.

Tlaletso: Ja uhm..

RF: What do you think could be lacking from the manual that you would like to see in a teacher's resource?

Tlaletso: Uhm… something that is lacking in the manual?

RF: Yes, what would you like to see more of that would be of use to you in planning for religion in your classes?

Tlaletso: I don't know but I think maybe some pictures. You know some pictures would make you to be more interested in looking at this and wanting to say: 'Yes, let me just, I think this is interesting I could do this I could do that …

RF: So instead of giving, or maybe in addition to putting the pictures on the disc other similar pictures could be in the manual itself …

Tlaletso: Ja, in the manual itself …ja..

RF: Ok umm, is there anything else other than pictures? Pictures are very useful, but what other information do you think you would like to see in teacher guides for religion.

Tlaletso: I think that manual is ok because it's got different religions, it has got the history of those religions it has got the way of doing things of those particular religions that's why I am saying if we can just get pictures because it's got even to show where to get this from

RF: So perhaps what could be added to it is maybe links to websites or other resources

Tlaletso; Yes other resources

RF: Because obviously you can't put everything into one manual but you could put links to other useful….

Tlaletso: to say for more information go to

RF: ok, uhmm….That's very useful…Alright you did start saying something about this when we started but maybe we could just it again or elaborate. Did you get any spontaneous comment or feedback from your learners after those lessons that you taught when I was present ?

Tlaletso: Ja, like I said they were excited they wanted me to continue. They said 'Ma'am why are you now stopping? Ma'am let's continue we were discussing so wonderfully and those were listening, especially the class of that little girl, you know S. They were very much interested, but Ma'am we want to hear more, S do you have anything again to inform us, we are not informed and they started even blaming the school. Ma'am you know we should be having a newspaper here in school atleast 2 newspapers in the hostel for us to read or to have TV news time we must go and watch because now we are so much in this school and we don't have any thing Ma'am you know so you can see they were eager to want to hear more from S because S is a day scholar and they in the hostel know absolutely nothing.

RF: They feel isolated…

Tlaletso: Ja, ja

RF: It's interesting.

Tlaletso: SO it was wonderful because they really wanted me to do something to say Ma'am let's discuss to say let's give S and others who have got information to tell us. MA'am this is Life Orientation we don't want stress like in Maths and in Science we are stressed and we come to Life Orientation and we become stressed again no Ma'am this is the time we have to relax and take off our stress.

RF: This wasn't part of it but I got the feeling that when you were doing some of those lessons with the Grade 9's and you were asking them about religions they were quite knowledgeable and I assume it must have been associated with the task that you had given them.

Tlaletso: Ja, ja, it was.

RF: So at the time that I was there you were taking those assignments in. What was the quality of those assignments that they handed in on the religions that they did? Was there an interest? Was it well done?

Tlaletso: For others it was really interesting because some of them I kept them it's just a pity I didn't bring them. I kept them they've written wonderful things. They went into internet and get information and some of the things I didn't even know about they brought the information. You know it was rich some of their information it was really rich and others will tell you about ZCC and finish there. They put on khakis when you talk of clothing and they've got their white shoes and they jump, way of worship and they jump it was just…but others they went deep they went deep you could see that the parents helped them. I remember even one parent phoned me to ask me how much her daughter got for that assignment

RF: Oh, maybe because she did it!

Tlaletso: Ja that's what I suspected. Mmm this one who wants marks it means she is the one who did it so it's not the child, she made it….

RF: ok. Um…if you think back over the 8 months or so that we have been busy - and if you think back on all the interviews and discussion group transcripts that I gave you to have a look at, is there any other point or experience or interaction that has made a big impact on you? Other than what you said about Rochelle and her input to you, is there anything that you would say that has made a really big impact on you?

Tlaletso: The thing that made a big impact on me I was not aware that there are people who don't anything about religion.

RF: Really??

Tlaletso: Pule! I was shocked when he was talking …I thought ..ho!....and to me it's like nobody doesn't know anything about religions. One must choose one religion you must be somewhere you must be ….you know …that's me that's what I've been thinking I have never thought there is somebody who does not go to church. There are people who drink but they get to church they do get….Pule doesn't drink but he says huh, I don't even know what they do in a church. You know that's what puzzled me…I thought is it real?

RF: And yet you know one of the interesting and contributions that he has made and what I thought that his school or he and his context would contribute towards a cluster is the different kinds of African Independent Churches that use his school. There's about 4 or 5 I've actually got the thing here. Look at this, these are all the different churches - he got all this information for me - different churches that pay, this is what they pay every month to use their school. And he was very knowledgeable about these churches and who belongs to them interestingly enough.

Tlaletso: Sjoe!!

RF: Ja, and that's why I had to interview him by himself, because he wasn't giving these… you and I and Rochelle were talking him under the table and that's why I eventually decided to interview him by himself because it was unbelievable how much information I got from him.

And then he spoke to me about different things that he is being invited to [interview stops, child calls her mother]

- Comment on what you said in previous group sessions:
- Think back to lesson you taught for the participant observation.

PAR STAGE 6 Full interview transcript:
Rochelle

3 rd December 2008.

RF: You can just think about what we have done together Based on our discussions what we have spoken about in the months in the focus groups that you were busy with us and of course whatever experiences you've had in the cluster, in the GDE, and it doesn't matter if you think you're repeating yourself from previous interviews. How do you think you could improve on the way in which you position religion education in your LO programmes? (Power and experiences of agency – Wenger, 2005, 26).

Rochelle: I would basically try and structure religion education across the board and not conform (sic) it to one lo in one period of time only because this is the area where it is based on the principles, the values, the respect for the learners one to another also it will effect their communication. So if you like take the portion and spread it cross so that the child is continuously confronted by it and it's not like a section that is done and completed and then put it in a cupboard. It's a living thing
not something that I can learn once off but continuously and continuously enhancing the life of the children. So is you look at the outset of the Learning Programme it's in little units and little blocks and if one portion is done in a period of time the learners are tested on it and it's really put on a shelf. But life you cannot put on a shelf and religious education is based on life.

RF: That's a good point. Ja.

What do you think you have learned being involved in this project. It was unfortunate that you had to go and do the Maths when you did. But in the time that you did spend with us your interaction with the three of us, myself, Tlaletso and Pule
what do you think you have learned?

Rochelle: Besides the fact that I had a change of view in my class what I learned from the three of you was to listen on a different level. Um.. there's different things we believe in there's different views that we had but I took those different views and I came into the class and I saw the learners having the different views so could marry the two and when they had their different views and different perceptions (perspectives?) we could work from there. And it actually allowed me to give them a right to speak up and when they discovered that it made them more open and what I also discovered is that later on they could also encourage one another they could support one another. Um…we also had some learners that shunned away but when they realised what I say doesn't matter so much but participation matters that lifted them up so the whole thing of communication between the four of us I actually allowed it to flow into the class.

RF: That's fantastic …and I bet you didn't learn that from being in the cluster.

(Laughter)

Rochelle: That is ..my learning skills come from something way different, but just to see we work from four different dimensions the school and the setup at Pule's school and Tlaletso's school, and uh …I had an opportunity to be there. With the meetings I had a look a that setup and I come back to our setup and looking at your setup at the university and you come in the class and you realise that **that** diversity is basically what you find in everyday life. And there was one specific day I just sat down and I didn't let them take out their books nothing. I just allowed them to just find themselves, but they didn't realise what I was doing so some turn around, some put their heads down some cluster and then communicated and when observed that I realised that some of these children easily fit in, some just shunned away if they are not programmed and uh..even though it wasn't in a teaching setup I could see the lifestyle of the children at home. [ ] and I used that in my lessons, so yes.

RF: What do you think you could take out of this experience to strengthen your colleagues at your school? When I say colleagues, others who are also involved in Life Orientation. What do you think you could take out of this experience to strengthen them?

Rochelle: What I have actually [ ] is that I will workshop my teachers in my department for next year. I have already communicated with some of them to go through the process…go through the policy of religious education, go through the requirements go through them looking at the real setup and not just being focused on the academic knowledge part and they've agree with that part I think it worked. Normally my focus is on the children but out of this thing I realised that when I communicated with Pule I realised that the people in my department might also just respond in the same manner and when I approached them they said, Ja it will enlighten them, 'cos some of them never had any LO training only one person that is really um an LO teacher. She went for all the courses, development and training. She is the one who registered with me for learner support I convinced her to that (sic) so the thing is I though that coming out of what we have done to just sit with them, share it with them. They knew I was involved in the project they could also pick it up from the children so sitting with them workshopping them through that I actually asked them can we do it in those first few days, take some time off and prepare them what I really want and where we are going to.

RF: So that means then, I am just jumping around here a bit, that you are going to perpetuate the community of practice idea… (laughter) quite willingly

Rochelle: That's the whole idea, that's the whole idea (laughter).

RF: Have you read the manual that I gave you?

Rochelle: I scrolled through it

RF: You scrolled through it. OK that's ok. And uh..have you used it or had an opportunity to look at in planning?

Rochelle: I used some of the information because like I said we are redesigning our assignments and things so then also what I've …what my intentions are to make a copy for every educator that I will be workshopping so they will know what the information is about and not just use the information without really knowing what it entails.

RF: Well my next questions to you are to look at the manual critically from the view point of its usefulness and possible improvement.

So if you remember the way in which I set the religions out in the manual. What do you think of that?

Rochelle: You know that actually gave me more information …you must know what we actually go on in the schools is basically what is in the text books that is for the standard LO teacher and some of the information that we have there is more so uh uh more expanded ..

RF: You mean in the manual it is more expanded

Rochelle: Yes, yes there was a few points I could even add to my knowledge (laughs).
Yes, so the information in it, come I say if I must go and workshop the other educators that information is quite expanded. From my own information I will most probably, maybe I can make a copy of one of my brochures for you, I mean one of my books that I use for research and then maybe you can just see if there is something you can add

RF: Ok, ok

Rochelle: So I will do that and I will also include it in the facts that the principal must bring for you

RF: Great , thank you.

So what do you think is lacking from the manual given your particular context here?
Because it needs to be reworked that's why I didn't give it to you completely bound because it needs to be reworked.

Rochelle: I wouldn't really say lacking. When we look at our context we don't have such a big diversity of religions. We have Christianity, ok that's dominating that's more than 80%, then we have a few children following Islam, and very few of those learners still on the African traditional so they are not so much exposed to the other religions however, you will read in here (her manual) I just wrote something about their knowledge made them realise how we can respect no matter what religion they follow it doesn't mean that I am practicing it, you see. So gaining the knowledge made the learners realise that we may be different but we're not
so different.

RF: Hmmm, that's nice, that's very nice.

So then in terms of your context there's enough general content for your classroom needs.

Rochelle: Enough general content yes.

RF: Um.. What kinds of information do you think you would like to see included in teacher guides for religion education?

Rochelle: The teacher guides they are giving are very brief, it's like a touch on things. And like I say, the knowledge of the stuff is not really there um they have like a paragraph of 80 words defining a religion. Like I said earlier on, this is life this is people's lives, people's belief systems and out of the belief systems you will know what the values are what the morals, the principles are and you can work from there and uh..and if you want to develop these values you need to ..in the guidelines if you want to bring about the principles you would give the information towards the thing that we want to develop but what I find lacking here is they give the content and there's no principles really that you want to develop really in the child. And if that can be brought into the guidelines then it doesn't matter if the teacher had any previous training or not he will be able to bring over the thing and
still be able to build in the values and principles that we want to.

RF: So we can really focus on the human rights and values aspect of that and really bring that out strongly.

Rochelle: Absolutely. I think it's in that same religious education that we want to bring out that. I mean, if we want to…if I must use an example. If we want to teach the young girls not to fall in the trap of teenage pregnancy where does it start it start over there because that is the principles whereby we live, but if that picture is not a friend to the child they don't see the need to abide by those value systems because it is just something that is thrown in the air to them. But if these things are built in the material like we do in Maths. The Maths is set in such a fashion that you build from one concept to the other concept and in religious studies it's the same principle can be applied. And then you be able to know that if teacher X comes in he will know where to start and how to build in that value if he moves and teacher B comes in he can just carry on building you see.. so I think that lacks.

RF: So that can be added into the manuals.

Rochelle: Added into the manuals, ja.

RF: Or teacher guides
(Ja, Ja)

RF: Ok, so you might have answered this one, but just to refer to those focus groups that you were involved in was there any point, experience or interaction
that has made a particular impact on you?

Rochelle: I think we covered that

RF: I think we covered that ja…

OK, then what I did here was just commented on..these were some things that I thought were really …they came out of Pule's comments, especially about religion and culture. I asked what kinds of things do you need? This was right early on and he said he needs information on indigenous religion, so do you think that applies to you here in any way?

Rochelle: To our school, not so much as to their school where their school is situated and um the percentage of enrolment of that type of culture to our culture but I see there is currently and influx because our school is bilingual so we do get that but it's not all the children practising and like I say we have 80% Christianity and then very few….I mean of this year I know of two learners who really do stay from school because of some of their religious practices, African children who need to go. It's very, very little but the information will never go away

RF: So it will be useful to you..

Rochelle: Ja, ja

RF: Then of course that will account for relationships between religion and culture

Rochelle: Yes definitely - the relationship between the two.

RF: Ja, so those aspects developed would be useful?

Rochelle: Yes, like a said the ways of the child is designed and developed by what he believes. SO there is a strong relationship between that

RF: Ja, and those are not always coming through very strongly in the text books.

Rochelle: No not at all. They are very knowledge based, and that's the sad part. The book is compiled in such a way as if it's just another Maths book or history book or science book. And yet it's the part…I think the initial design or origin when they put LO in was to enhance that part of the human being but they just lacking in it as it had become a side subject, something sidely (sic) and

if they can go back to the initial purpose of having Life Orientation I think it will succeed. Because the whole purpose of that was really to equip every learner to be compatible, capable to handle himself in any situation. And if you look at the communities the communities are diverse you really need to know how to respond to the person living next to you
you know?

RF: Mmm, because even morality, moral systems or value systems are diverse

Rochelle: Mmm, definitely

RF: And I think you brought that out quite nicely in one of the earlier interviews where you had the learners working in groups and they had to look at ideas of dressing and how morality came out of that.

That's the last question that I have so is there anything else that you would like to comment on?

Rochelle: Ja, even though you say that doesn't spring forth from this but this made me focus on those areas. I knew when I presented I could do it different because of who I am but you made me realise that I need to focus on different things different angles to really pay attention to….to… you know it's small things in a setup of 40 children but to look at them and realise they are also diverse and go according to that.

RF: Mmm, it's very meaningful to me.

Rochelle: So you come in here and strange enough when we used to have our meetings – and then they would come in and I would look at them first, you know look at them, right where did we stop? And then assess for a moment to see whether that thing is relevant to my situation here or must I check it out.

RF: And that's the important part of it, that's why my title of my thesis is *Situated learning as a teacher development option for religion in Life Orientation* because that's why I keep asking you about your context, because what you get in the text books and what you get from the clusters is a blanket way of teaching when in fact that's not what it about it's about acknowledging the diversity - and that diversity is diverse in itself

Rochelle: Absolutely

RF: And acknowledging what your learners… what's the point in teaching them all sorts of different religions when they haven't even dealt with their own contexts? And that's what I envisage as being the starting point and then you move them out to the broader community. Even for the teachers themselves and you own knowledge base how much do all of you know? How much do you know about Bahai, yes there's lots of Bahai people in South Africa but do you find Bahai people here and we should learn about Bahai people eventually but right now what your learners are grappling with in terms of diversity as it is defined here is important.

Rochelle: Mmmm. But what I want to say just to record it now.

RF: Ok

Rochelle: Some of the learners are changing their religion because of what they can get out. There's a …it's quite sensitive…but ok. Like I said the community is very under privileged. The social-economic situation is bad and then there's this hand that just sticks out, making provision for them giving them food packages and things like that so they would change and follow a different belief system but that is not out of a desire to do so. It's because they are tired of their lack of having, so that is one of the things that's being experienced here in this community.
And like I had a group of learners one of the groups that was dropped in my lap during that period of time, Grade 11, and this one boy I knew him, Grade 8, Grade 9, Grade 10 he was Christian and

now Grade 11 he says he must leave at 12 because he must go to pray. Ok, this is new. And then during the fasting period I saw him having on his [topee] ok this is new and then I just said to him now when did all this happen? And then I realised they are just tired of not having and that changed that. Ja.

RF: Mmm, that's interesting.
Ok thank you.

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RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION.

A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS OF LIFE ORIENTATION IN THE SENIOR AND FET PHASES.

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Background information on major religions in South Africa

INTRODUCTION

The starting point for this manual is the right to the freedom of religion, belief or opinion, a right that is embraced by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Bill of Rights in The Constitution of South Africa (1996 (15)). The right to the freedom of religion or belief is echoed in the National Curriculum Statements (Grades R-9; 10-12) and is specifically associated with Citizenship Education (Outcome 2) in the Life Orientation learning area.

This manual has been written to assist Life Orientation educators to design appropriate learning experiences to foster an appreciation for religious and cultural diversity and therewith the right to freedom of religion or belief. In order to achieve this however, you, as educators, require a basic understanding of the religions that you are most likely to encounter in your classes. The aim of this manual however, is not to provide all the information on the various religions and cultures practiced in South Africa, but there should be enough to provide you with a framework to design interesting learning experiences. This manual is a guide only and should be read in conjunction with other BOOKS on different religions. I say books, because we tend to resort so easily to internet sites which are often not trustworthy. In saying this however, there are interesting and creative sites, but we should not confine ourselves to these. I trust that you will be inspired to read and explore the fascinating world of religious diversity beyond this manual to increase your own understanding and appreciation for the richness of this field of knowledge.

South Africa is a country in which many different religions are practiced. It is very interesting to note that many of the religions of the world are also part of South Africa's social fabric. The religions that are covered in this manual are Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. Traditional African religions, the indigenous religions of Africa and Southern Africa in particular, are also covered. The indigenous religions were unfortunately overlooked in describing South Africa's religious make-up in the past, but are now demarcated as an important area of study in the NCS. Do not be limited to the list of religions or beliefs in the NCS. Your learners are likely to ask questions about religions such as Rastafari and the Bahai so be prepared to learn something about these religions as well. While you will become aware of the similarities between religions and beliefs and related value systems, it is the differences that are so fascinating and provide opportunities for inter-religious dialogue! Dialogue between yourself and your learners and between the learners themselves is essential for the prevention of misunderstandings and conflict.

As there are so many different denominations or branches in religions, Christianity and Hinduism in particular, only the broad outline of the religions will be presented in the manual and not specific dogma or traditions associated with denominations or branches. It may be a good idea to invite religious teachers or leaders from your community to talk to your learners about specific areas of belief or practice.

For many of you as educators in South Africa, the study of religions and beliefs other than your own is a new and different experience. The main aim here is to present an understanding of religions in order to understand fellow South Africans who practice a

belief system different to your own, not to present any one 'Truth', as the only 'Truth'. Freedom to practice the religion of one's choice is the constitutional right of all of our people, a right that ought to be respected in our education system. Keep in mind that the right to freedom of religion or belief means that people also have the right *not* to believe. For this reason, it will be useful to include the world views or philosophies of life of people who refer to themselves as *atheist* or *agnostic* (especially in the FET phase).

A comprehensive reference list is provided at the end of the manual for you to refer to in your search for additional information about religions and beliefs that are accurate and unbiased. The books included in the list are still in print and should be available from book stores and local libraries.

FRAMEWORK FOR STUDY

In order to bring clarity to what is in fact a vast area of study, this manual has been written from the perspective of Ninian Smart's dimensional analysis of religions: doctrinal, mythical or narrative, ritual, ethical, material or artistic dimensions. These have been broken down into more descriptive terms to be more accessible to school learners, thus the reference to *sacred spaces, sacred time and sacred writings* for example. It is important to note that these dimensions are not equally present in every religion. Sometimes one dimension may be more evident in certain religions than in others, such as in the case of those religions which have sacred scriptures. African traditional religions do not have bodies of sacred texts, but that is not to say that they do not have stories or myths which serve as the means by which beliefs, ethics and values are passed on. Also, individuals or families or communities may celebrate or perform certain rituals in a slightly different way to other individuals, families or communities. We should never treat the religious experiences of people as being exact replicas of what we read in the literature. When you use the information in this manual, remember that variations of tradition and practice will arise as your learners share their beliefs and practices with you. It is these variations that add richness to the concept 'diversity', a core concept in the Life Orientation curriculum.

Religion education, human rights and values

Religions usually are concerned with moral behaviour or ethical principles. For this reason, religions become important sources of values and promote human rights. Although certain religions or religious groups have become notorious for human rights violations or for promoting value systems that are so exclusive as to be intolerant of 'outsiders', religious groups have also challenged discrimination, abuse and violence in the name of religion or religious belief. Take time to explore with your learners how the ethical traditions in religions are important contributors to human rights education.

Although Judaism is historically not the oldest religion, I have started with Judaism, followed by Christianity and then continued with Islam, since many of our learners understand something of the Judeao-Christian experience. There are no sinister intentions with starting as I have!

This manual is open to debate and discussion – in the context of the Community of Practice. The contributions of those of you who have something to share about religion, religious diversity or belief will be welcome.

JUDAISM

The words *"Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One"* (Deuteronomy 6:4) express the underlying faith of Israel (the forefathers of the Jews). For the Jew there exists one, indivisible God who is the creator of the universe and everything in it. The first person to give expression to this monotheistic faith was the patriarch Abraham who lived more than 3000 years ago. Judaism sees itself today as a direct development from the time when its God revealed himself to Abraham. Jews believe however that it was the prophet Moses, who led the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt, who was the recipient of the Torah (the Pentateuch or first five books of the Bible) at Mount Sinai and who was the founder of Israel as a nation.

1. THE JEWISH SENSE OF HISTORY

The Hebrew Bible (*Tanakh)* is believed to be the record of the dealings of Israel's God with the people of Israel. The study of Jewish history is long and requires more time than we have at our disposal. However, if you are familiar with the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament, then many of the events and significant leaders will not be totally foreign to you. The story of Moses and his role in the liberation of the enslaved Israelites from Egypt will be outlined, because it provides the background to many other events and beliefs in Judaism.

Moses

Orthodox Jews believe that Moses was born to Israelite parents more than 3000 years ago (modern scholars argue around 1250 BCE) during Israel's period of bondage in Egypt. The Pharaoh at the time of Moses' birth declared that all Israelite babies should be killed, because he felt threatened by the increasing numbers of the Israelites. Moses' sister Miriam placed Moses in a basket, hid him amongst the reeds on the river Nile, where he was later found by the Pharaoh's daughter. Moses was subsequently brought up in the court of the Pharaoh while the Israelites suffered as they were forced to work on the Pharaoh's building programmes. It appears that Moses had not forgotten his heritage. One day he witnessed an Egyptian slave master beating an Israelite slave. He was angered by the sight and killed the Egyptian. Fearing for his own life, Moses fled Egypt to the desert of Midian in the Sinai Peninsula.

It was in Midian that Moses received his calling to liberate the Israelites from Egypt. The biblical accounts relate how God spoke to Moses from a burning bush and instructed him to return to Egypt. The drama of the last days of the Israelites in Egypt and their final liberation is narrated in the Book of Exodus in the Torah. It seems that it was not that easy to convince the Pharaoh to release the Israelite slaves in spite of various 'signs' given to Moses by God. Various plagues (locusts, frogs, flies) were unleashed upon the Egyptians, yet the Pharaoh refused to allow the Israelites to leave. The tenth plague was the harshest of all and involved the death of the first born sons of Egypt. The death of the first born included the Pharaoh's son, a great loss, since the Pharaohs at this time viewed themselves as being the physical manifestation of the sun god, *Ra*. The death of the Pharaoh's son forced him to succumb and allowed the Israelites to leave. Moses managed to lead the Israelites through the Re(e)d Sea to freedom. The journey out of Egypt is known as the *Exodus*.

Moses' leadership reached its pinnacle at Mt. Sinai where Israel's God reaffirmed his "Covenant" with them (a special kind of relationship which had originally been

established with Abraham). God gave to Moses the entire Torah, as well the two stone tablets upon which the Ten Commandments were written. For Orthodox Jews, God's will was made manifest in the Written Torah. Moses was the one who wrote down the words under Divine prophecy during the forty-year period after the Exodus. Moses is thus highly regarded as the vehicle of God's voice to the Israelites and the only prophet who spoke "face to face" with God.

The events of the Exodus are remembered annually in the festival of the Passover (see below). For Jews it is important to recall the many events of Jewish history. This they do in the various festivals that make up the Jewish calendar and in the rites of passage.

2. MAIN BELIEFS

Although it is difficult to outline the tenets of Judaism, there are certain major themes that can be identified as central to Jewish belief and practice. Not all Jews observe rituals and practices in the same way. Orthodox (or traditional) Jews, believe that they are bound by the traditional rabbinical systems of law, as a way of achieving closeness to God. Reform Jews regard Judaism as an open-ended, evolving religion rather than fixed forever by the revealed Torah. Reform Jews have therefore adopted a modernistic approach to religious observance, re-evaluating the laws for their relevance to modern needs (Fisher, 1997: 261).

2.1 Jewish God-concept

As noted already, Judaism is strictly monotheistic. This means that Jews believe that God is One. According to the Hebrew Bible, God revealed His Divine Name Y*ahweh* to his servant Moses, shortly before the Exodus from Egypt. This name for God translates as "I AM" (Exodus 3:14) and reveals something about the Divine Nature. The name of God stresses the essential holiness and absoluteness of God. God is the Creator of the universe. He transcends creation and is never perceived as being the same as creation. God is a loving Father, who is at the same time infinitely majestic.

The most fundamental commandment to humans is to love God. Love for, and belief in One God is expressed in a prayer known as the *Shema*:

> *"Hear, O Israel! The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might"* (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

Every Jew is required to recite the Shema twice a day, morning and evening, in fulfillment of the biblical precept to talk of these words *when you lie down and when you rise up.*

It is important to note that the Divine Name, *Yahweh,* may not be uttered by Jews for fear of denigrating God's name, something forbidden by the fourth commandment. Therefore, circumlocutions (other names or terms of reference) are used such as *Hashem* (The Name) or *The Holy One (Blessed be He)*. You will notice that Jewish people will write *God* as *G-d* to show their respect for the name of God.

2.2 Law

Central to an understanding of the relationship between God and the Jew is the concept of Law. Orthodox Jews believe that God has revealed his divine will for them in the Written and Oral Torah (cf. See below ***Sacred Writings***). The Torah, as taught through rabbinic literature, is said to contain 613 commandments, or ***mitzvot.*** It is these mitzvot that regulate the behaviour of the Jew. The Jewish judicial system (*halakhah)* covers every aspect of life. On the one hand it deals with religious duties that Jews are required to observe and on the other, to ethical or moral obligations.

2.3 Sacred writings

The Hebrew scriptures are referred to as ***Tenakh***, and consist of the Torah (the Five Books of Moses), Nevi'im (the prophets) and Ketuvim (various writings, such as The Psalms, Proverbs, Ruth, Daniel, Lamentations and Esther). For Orthodox Jews, the Torah is the most sacred and authoritative of the sacred writings since at the highest level, Torah is God's will, God's wisdom. The Torah is viewed as the eternal record of God's will communicated to mortal and finite human beings.

Orthodox Jews believe that the Torah was divinely revealed to Moses, the prophet and leader responsible for Israel's liberation from Egypt, at Mt. Sinai. Jews believe that Moses wrote the Torah under divine authority. The Law is believed to be unchangeable. It contains all the rules for living, including civil laws and ritual laws, which should not be compromised by modernism. A great deal of emphasis is placed on the study of the Torah, since, Jews believe, it is only through study that God's rules become clear, wisdom is increased and people draw closer to the God. The Torah's significance is evident in that the reading from the Torah is central to synagogue services on the Sabbath and on festival days.

A different, but specified portion of the Torah is allotted to each week of the year. Each portion is called a *parasha* and the contents provide the guiding principals for the week. The entire Torah is read portion by portion through the year (52 parasha) and then restarted with great rejoicing at the festival of Simcha Torah around September or October each year.

The expression *Torah* includes the ***Oral Torah***. The Oral Torah contains the details of the general principles contained in the Written Torah, and the ways in which the commandments are to be applied. Orthodox Jews believe that Moses received the Oral Torah alongside the Written Torah at Mt. Sinai and that it was passed on to successive generations of spiritual leaders. During the second century CE the Oral Torah was committed to writing and thereafter referred to as the ***Mishna.*** The Mishna then became the subject of debate and discussion by later sages, resulting in the ***Gemara***. Mishna and Gemara together make up the ***Talmud***.

3. SACRED TIME

The concept of sacred time in Judaism serves to remind Jews of their relationship and commitment to God through specific acts of worship. Significant historical events in which Jews believe that their God displayed his love and protection for them are also recalled in the various festivals and are therefore an aspect of sacred time.

3.1 Shabbat (The Sabbath)

The most frequently observed holy day is *Shabbat*. This word simply means 'ceasing', and therefore the spirit of the day is captured in its term of reference. Shabbat is a complete day of rest. It commences each Friday with the onset of twilight and ends on Saturday evening with the emergence of three visible stars in the sky. Orthodox Jews consult a type of time chart for the area in which they live to find out the exact time that Shabbat (or sometimes pronounced as *Shabbas)* will begin. In South Africa, the times marking the onset of Shabbat are published in local newspapers.

Shabbat is a day of rest in commemoration of God's creation of the world. Just as God stopped creating on this day, so should people stop creating. Human beings are meant to stop manipulating nature, to allow nature to run its own course and thereby to enter into a spirit of peace and harmony. The Talmud identifies 39 categories of work that have to 'cease' as soon as Shabbat begins. The 'work' that should cease on the Sabbath, includes driving (many Jews walk to the synagogue), turning on lights, cooking (food is prepared before the Sabbath begins), sewing, writing, using the telephone as wells as computers or any other form of technology!

Shabbat is also a memorial to the Exodus from Egypt, since on this day, Jews are to cherish their freedom from servitude to human masters. The day is seen as a day of spiritual renewal, a God-given opportunity to worship, study and enjoy time with one's family.

Discussion idea for learners in Grades 10, 11 or 12.

- **What Jewish values do you think are emphasised in upholding the laws of Shabbat?**
- **Alternatively, some people think that the way in which observant Jews keep Shabbat is 'hedged in with laws'. What do you think?**

3.2 Holy days and festivals

A further aspect of sacred time is evident in the vast array of Jewish festivals and high holy days celebrated during the course of the year. These will be described briefly in the order in which they occur during the course of the Jewish year.

- **Purim**

This festival commemorates the victory of the Jews in Persia over the evil viceroy, Haman, as a result of the intervention of Esther. Esther was a Jewish woman married to a Persian king. Purim is celebrated in March (14 Adar) and is associated with dressing up in fancy dress. The story of Esther is read from an ornate scroll in the synagogue service. The congregation responds with noisy stamping of the feet, shaking of rattles and whistles whenever Haman's name is mentioned during the reading.

[The Book of Esther in the Bible is a worthwhile read!]

Pesach (Passover)
Pesach commemorates the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. The Torah refers to Pesach as the "Festival of Unleavened Bread", the observance with which it is most distinctly identified. For eight days (seven in Israel), Jewish people will eat food containing no leaven. This practice is a
reminder of the time when the ancient Israelites left Egypt in a hurry and did not have time for their bread to rise. It is traditional to eat Matzos, or unleavened bread for the entire eight days of the festival.

On the first two nights of Passover (Orthodox Jews in the Diaspora), a ritual meal called the **seder** is eaten. *Seder* means **order**, so called because it is a ritual meal accompanied by a specific order of service unlike any other festive meal of the year. One of the items on the seder table is the seder plate which contains ritual foods with symbolic meaning. The foods are:

matzah: the 'bread of affliction' or unleavened bread, recalls the haste with which the Israelites left Egypt;

bitter herbs (horseradish): symbolises the bitterness endured by the Israelites during their bondage;

haroset (mixture of grated apples, nuts and wine, spiced with cinnamon)**:** the mortar used by the Israelites to build the Egyptian cities;

salt water: the tears shed by the people in their misery (dish of salt water);

karpas (green vegetables – celery, parsley or lettuce): dipped into the salt water, yet it is a sign of spring, of fruitfulness, of ever-renewed hope in the future;

a shankbone and egg: both recall the destruction of the Temple and symbolise the Paschal offering brought when the Temple in Jerusalem was in existence. An egg is a traditional symbol of mourning.

- **Shavout**

Shavuot commemorates the giving of the Torah to Moses at Mt. Sinai. In ancient times this festival was associated with the giving of the first fruits of the harvest. The name *Shavuot* means "weeks" and is derived from the fact that it is observed seven full weeks from the Passover. Shavuot is associated with eating at least one dairy meal to emphasise the significance of not eating meat and milk together (cf. The Laws of Kashrut).

- **Rosh Hashanah**

Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year that takes place in the Hebrew month of Tishrai, September or October in the Western Calendar. Rosh Hashanah is the start of a ten day period of self-examination and repentance, culminating with Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Together these days are known as *The Days of Awe.* Rosh Hashanah is characterised by intense prayer and acknowledgement of God's sovereignty over the world. It is a religious duty to listen to the blowing of the shofar (ram's horn) on this day. Various symbolic foods are eaten such as round breads and apples dipped in honey. These foods symbolise the hope that the new year will be a sweet one.

- **Yom Kippur**

Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement. It is the most important Holy day on the Jewish calendar. It is a day devoted to intense fasting, prayer and asking forgiveness of those who one may have wronged over the past year. This is necessary before one can ask forgiveness of God. Jews usually attend synagogue services on this day, where they confess their sins and pray for reconciliation to God as a congregation. The fast on Yom Kippur is a 25 hour fast when Jews will refrain from eating, drinking and from wearing leather shoes.

- **Sukkot**

This holiday follows five days after Yom Kippur. For seven days, Jewish people "live" in outdoor booths or tabernacles built in their gardens. These fragile dwellings are reminders of how God sheltered their ancestors during the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness after liberation from Egypt.

- **Hanukkah**

This festival commemorates the victory of the Jews over the attempts of the Syrian king, Antiochus IV Ephiphanes to force non-Jewish practices on them in the 2nd century BCE. The festival is associated with the lighting of a nine-branched candleholder known as a ***hannukiah***. Each night for eight nights one more branch of the hannukiah is lit. According to legend, when the Jews regained access to their Temple, they found only one jar of undefiled oil, enough to burn for one day only. Miraculously, the oil remained burning for eight days, thus the practice of lighting the hannukiah.

Hannukiah: eight-branched menorah lit during Hannukah with 'service' light at the centre (called the *shamash* candle)
(☮ CD)

4. SACRED SPACE (THE SYNAGOGUE)

(☮ CD)

The Jewish centre for meeting, prayer and learning is known as a ***synagogue.*** Jewish people refer to it as the ***shul.*** A synagogue may be any building set aside for prayer. In Hebrew the synagogue is referred to as Beit Knesset meaning a *House of Assembly*. The name emphasises the fact that the synagogue serves purposes beyond that of being a centre only for public worship. The synagogue is also associated with the study of Torah, as a centre for the education of children and for community activities.

Services take place in synagogues on Friday evenings (the onset of Shabbat) and twice on Saturdays. Jewish men attend additional prayer services during the week and generally people will attend synagogue services during the festivals.

There are many synagogues in different countries around the world and they will usually reflect the architecture of the dominant culture in that country. But, there are some elements that will be found in all synagogues. These are outlined below:

- **Holy Ark**: a cabinet, or recess in the wall in which the scrolls of the Torah are kept. The curtain covering the Ark is called a *parokhet*. The Holy Ark is usually set into the wall facing in the direction of Jerusalem, which in South Africa is north-east. Prayers are therefore directed towards the Holy Ark. **(☮ CD)**
- **Ner Tamid**: or the *eternal light*. A lamp placed above and in front of the Ark. It is meant to burn continuously. It is symbolic of the Biblical directive to "cause a lamp to burn continually in the tabernacle outside of the parokhet which is before the Ark of the testimony ….(Ex. 27:20-21).**(☮ CD)**
- **Bimah**: is the platform, traditionally set apart from the Ark, on which there is a table. It is from this table that the Torah is read to the congregation and the Reader or cantor (hazzan) is responsible for leading the service. **(☮ CD)**
- A **menorah** (a seven-branched candleholder) may be placed in a prominent place in front of the Ark, although it is not obligatory. It is reminiscent of the seven-branched menorah of the Temple. **(☮ CD)**
- The **women's section** is an ancient and distinctive section of the traditional or Orthodox synagogue. Men and women do not sit together, so that men can concentrate on the prayers. This practice is reminiscent of the women's court at the Temple, by means of which the free mingling of the sexes was prevented. In Reform synagogues there is no separate section for women and men and women worship together. **(☮ CD)**

There are no real restrictions on the art forms of a synagogue, except that the décor must be devoid of any human figures or images. The main reason being that the second commandment forbids the Jew to make any image or idol as a means to worship God. **(☮ CD)**

5. SACRED FUNCTIONARIES

(☮ CD)

In the Jewish community there are various leaders who take responsibility for spiritual leadership of the community and the general upkeep of the synagogues. We will mention only two, the **rabbi** and the **hazzan**.

5.1 The rabbi

The rabbi is the religious and spiritual head of a Jewish congregation and has to be a man of integrity. The hallmarks of the respect shown to him by his community are his personal faith and piety, as well as his expert knowledge of the Torah, the Talmud and the Codes of Law. The rabbi must not only teach the Torah and the Jewish way of life to his community, but also personally reflect the values and the ways of the faith in his own conduct. The rabbi plays an important role in leading the services on Shabbat and the festivals. He is usually assisted by the **hazzan** or cantor.

5.2 The Cantor

The cantor is usually responsible for leading the congregation in prayer. The cantor must be able to chant the notes or melodies of the Hebrew prayers correctly. He will have had suitable training in order to understand the Hebrew prayers and the various chants appropriate for different services. Training in voice and music is usually encouraged to enhance his professional status. The hazzan must however also be a man well-versed

in Torah, he must be a man of wisdom and piety. The cantor will be called upon to assist the rabbi at weddings and funerals, and any of the festivals that require vocal chantings.

6. RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

The Torah calls upon the Jew to live a sanctified or holy life. This means being ethically and morally conscious. For the observant Jew, to live a holy life means to obey the laws of God and to apply these to all facets of daily living, to keep the prayer times, the dietary laws and to show kindness and concern for others.

6.1 Prayer

For Judaism, prayer is the most universal reflection of the human response to God. Prayer at its most sincere levels is called a "service of the heart". It is also one of the many ways by which love of God is expressed. Prayer as a religious duty is equally incumbent upon men and women.

In Judaism there are three daily prayer services, morning, afternoon and evening. Two of the three prayer services became substitutes for the three sacrificial offerings that had been central to worship in ancient times in the Temple in Jerusalem. The three daily prayer services are also ascribed to the practices of the Patriarchs. The morning prayer is ascribed to Abraham, the afternoon prayer to Isaac and the evening prayer to Jacob. For the Patriarchs, prayer was conducted as an act of faith, an example to be emulated by all the descendants of Abraham.

Women are not bound to the three formal prayer services, nor are they required to join in public congregational worship. This exemption takes into consideration a woman's primary responsibility as wife and mother. As noted above, prayer is a duty incumbent upon women as well as men, but women may do so at any time convenient to them. Attendance at synagogue is not a statutory religious requirement for women either.

To ensure that prayer would always be meaningful, the Sages (ancient Jewish teachers) insisted upon certain conditions for prayer to take place. They called for purity of thought and sanctity of place, as well as proper and respectful behaviour during prayer. There should be no distractions during prayer, one of the reasons why men and women are separated in Orthodox synagogues during Sabbath services and some of the festivals and high holy days.

In Judaism, even the most mundane actions and experiences are sanctified by a benediction. For example, a prayer praising God accompanies the act of washing upon rising and grace before meals. The cultivation of everyday God-consciousness is chiefly effected through acts of daily prayer.

6.2 Dietary laws (Laws of kashrut)

The laws of *kashrut,* or dietary laws, govern the consumption of food in Judaism. Mealtime therefore also has a religious dimension on account of the laws concerning permitted and forbidden foods. *Kashrut* means 'fit' in the sense of 'fit to be eaten'. What is not kosher is said to be *trefah.*

All fruits and vegetables may be eaten. Only the meat of four-legged animals with split hooves, fish with scales and fins and birds, as long as they are not birds of prey, may be eaten. The animal must be slaughtered by a trained *shohet* (butcher), who must be a pious person well versed in the laws pertaining to ritual slaughter.

The mixing of milk and meat products is also prohibited. The reasons being that the Torah states three times (Ex. 23:19; 34:26; Deut. 14:21): ***"You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk".*** From this the Oral Torah derived the prohibition against cooking meat and milk together, as well as against eating a milk dish and meat dish together or a product that contains meat ingredients and milk ingredients.

Separate cooking and eating utensils have to be maintained for the preparation of meat and milk products. A specified time period must elapse after one has eaten meat before one may eat a dairy product. Acceptable practices range from three hours to six hours. This is to allow time for the deterioration of the fatty residue which clings to the palate and does not easily rinse out, and of the meat particles lodged in the crevices of the teeth. The reverse is not necessary. After one has eaten dairy, one may rinse the mouth, eat a neutral solid such as bread and then proceed to the meat meal.

Foods that do not contain milk or meat, or derivatives of either, are considered to be neutral and are referred to as **parev**. Parev foods include vegetables, fruits, nuts, coffee, tea, spices, sugar, salt, eggs and may be eaten with either dairy or meat products.

For Orthodox Jews, observance of the dietary laws must be viewed in relation to the Jewish judicial system as a whole. The dietary laws are not merely a diet for the body, but a diet for the soul as well. The Jew yields to them, because the laws are Divine Commandments whether the motives for them are understood or not. Wherever the food laws are referred to in the Torah, there is also a call to holiness (cf. Leviticus 11). Holiness means being in control of one's passions. The rabbis teach that observance of the dietary laws contributes towards an overall sense of moral responsibility. The capacity to resist forbidden foods strengthens one's capacity to resist other forbidden unethical actions.

In the words of Rabbi Hayim Halevy Donin (1972:100): *"The laws of kashrut do not stand isolated from the purposes and goals, from the disciplines and demands that are part of the total picture of Judaism".*

6.3 Dress

There are no particular styles of dress in Judaism, but the act of dressing has religious connotations. Modesty of dress and behaviour contribute towards moral sensibility. Women are not to wear clothing that will expose parts of their bodies that would normally be covered. Married women should also cover their heads. Many Orthodox Jewish women will wear a ***sheitl*** or wig to cover their hair, while others will wear hats or scarves. Orthodox Jewish men are meant to wear a skullcap known as a ***yarmulke*** or ***kippah***, to indicate that they are servants of the Lord. Head coverings should be worn in a synagogue, in any consecrated area (such as a cemetry), and whenever one says his or her prayers or recites a blessing.

6.4 Signs of the Covenant

In Jewish life, there are various signs or symbols intended to serve as reminders of God's presence, God's commandments and of one's duties to God. The practices associated with ***tefillin, mezuzah, tzitzit and tallit*** are such reminders to observe the commandments (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

- **Tefillin** – or phylacteries, are two small black boxes, containing small scrolls of parchment upon which are written passages from the Torah. Jewish men tie tefillin to the left arm and the forehead as reminders that God's laws must be obeyed.

- **Mezuzah** – a small scroll of parchment on which are written two passages from the Torah. The parchment scroll is rolled up, enclosed in a case of wood, metal or plastic and attached to the doorposts in a Jewish home. The attachment of mezuzahs to doorposts is in fulfilment of the commandment to place God's laws on the gates and doorposts of one's home.

- **Tzitzit and tallit** – worn in fulfilment of the following commandment in Numbers 15:37-41 which calls for the attachment of fringes **(tzitzit)** to four-cornered garments (**tallit**) as a reminder of God's commandments:

  " *Speak unto the children of Israel and bid them that they make them throughout their generations fringes in the corners of their garments, and that they put with the fringe of each corner a thread of blue…..that you may look at it and remember all the commandments of the Lord….".*

In order to observe and implement this commandment, Jewish men wear the *tallit,* or prayer shawl, a four-cornered robe with the required titzit or tassles during the morning prayer service. It is the titzit on the four corners of the tallit that provide it with its religious significance, because these tally with the 613 mitzvot or commandments that Jews are meant to observe.

Pious people will also wear a small tallit, a four-cornered garment that fits over the shoulders, covering chest and back, under the shirt. Tassles are made to hang through the clothing serving as reminders of God's commandments, not only during prayer, but all day as well.

7. RITES OF PASSAGE

Jews celebrate the passage through life with appropriate rituals. Judaism has developed rites and ceremonies for these occasions. There are relatively few Torah laws that bear directly on these occasions. The guidelines set down by the rabbis for their observances are derived from the whole framework of spiritual values inherent in the Jewish faith. These rites of passage therefore are also an aspect of sacred time.

7.1 Birth

The family takes on a new meaning with the birth of a new child, an occasion of great joy in the Jewish community. The covenant of circumcision or ***Brit Milah*** is observed for all males on the eighth day of life. This commandment goes back to Abraham's time and is recorded in Genesis 17: 9-14. This rite is so important to Judaism that throughout the ages Jews have been put to death rather than give up the practice. For each Jew, circumcision is the outward sign of the eternal covenant between God and Israel. The Brit Milah may take place at home, in a hospital or in the synagogue. The boy is also named at the *bris*. Since this is both a ceremonial and surgical act, the *bris* must be performed by a trained person, known as a *mohel*. Those who attend the ceremony include the child's father, the *sandek* or godfather who holds the child during the *bris*. The father of the child recites the benediction. Prayers are said that the child may study the Torah, enter into marriage and perform good deeds.

Another ancient ceremony associated with the birth of a baby, is known as ***Pidyon Haben*** or the redemption of the first born. In ancient times, all first born sons were to be consecrated to the service of the Lord. A Jewish father will redeem his first born son on the thirty-first day of his son's life with five pieces of silver. By tradition, the father

presents his son to a Kohen*, who like the Levites, performed all the priestly functions in the days of the Temple.

A baby girl is named at the synagogue service on the Sabbath following her birth. The father will be called to participate in the reading of the Torah to honour this occasion.

[*Note: the Levites are descended from the tribe of Levi, son of Jacob. Kohens are descended from Aaron, the brother of Moses and the first High Priest of Israel.]

7.2 Education and Bar Mitzvah

About a month before a boy reaches his thirteenth birthday he is expected to learn how to don the tallit and lay tefillin. On the Sabbath following his thirteenth birthday, the boy is called to participate in the formal reading of the Torah during the synagogue service. This occasion is referred to as ***Bar Mitzvah*** meaning ***Son of the Commandment***. It marks the fact that a boy has reached the stage of religious maturity. He must now fulfill additional religious responsibilities and become accountable for his own behaviour. The boy will assume full responsibility for the observance of all precepts and commandments.

Reform Jews observe a similar ceremony for girls, called a ***Bat Mitzvah***. The girl reads from Haftarah, a reading from the Prophets. However, this ceremony is not regarded as obligatory in Orthodox Judaism.

Having reached adulthood, the Jew is individually responsible to live in accordance with Jewish law until the moment of death.

7.3 ***Marriage***

When young people join together to form a new family, they believe they are perpetuating a tradition dating back more than three thousand years. Marriage in Judaism is considered to be a holy covenant between the bride and groom. Mutual understanding and trust between the bride and groom are basic requirements for a valid marriage. Each new family is considered holy and sanctified and is the centre of religious life for all Jews and is the key to happiness. From within the family there will be new life to be protected and preserved. Life is the most precious gift from God.

The family is the core of Jewish society and a centre of its religious life and the context for passing on Jewish values. Judaism teaches that if the home is stable and loving, then all of life and all its institutions, namely, religious, educational, social, will be stable. If the home is weak, emotionally, morally and spiritually, all other aspects of life will mirror that weakness. In Judaism there are laws covering every aspect of family life. These include:

- Respect for the integrity, individuality and feeling of each member of the family as a human being;
- The development of peaceful and harmonious relationships between the members of the family;
- Children are taught to honour their parents. The fifth commandment, ‘Honour your father and your mother’ (Exodus 20:12) is one of the biblical precepts that underlies the relationship between parents and their children in Judaism.
- Maintaining a wholesome sexual relationship between husband and wife and a wholesome sexual attitude between men and women in general. Adultery and pre-marital sex are not condoned in Judaism.

The wedding ceremony takes place under a canopy, called a ***huppah***, which symbolises the new home established through marriage. The *huppah* also lends an atmosphere of royalty, for the bride and groom are king and queen on their wedding day. The parents of both bride and groom stand under the huppa and perform a part in the ceremony. The couple will sip from a cup of wine as a reminder of a common destiny and the inseparability of their lives. The first cup of wine is regarded as a cup of joy. The groom places a ring on the bride's finger and says:

> *By this ring you are consecrated to me as my wife in accordance with the Law of Moses and the people of Israel.*

The ***Ketubah*****,** or marriage document is then read in Aramaic by the rabbi. It details the obligations of the bride and groom to each other. After reading the Ketubah, seven blessings (Sheva Berakhot) are recited over a second cup of wine. These blessings praise God, the creator of all things and the giver of life, and ask for happiness for the couple.

The second cup of wine is the cup of sacrifice, or sorrow. It is a reminder that in the midst of joy there can be sorrow, and this too must be shared. The ceremony ends with the groom breaking a wineglass underfoot. This is a symbolic act recalling the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE. The ceremony is followed by a festive meal with song and dance.

7.4 ***The End of Life – death and funeral rites***

When death approaches, friends and relatives close by, should encourage the dying person to utter the words: "Hear O Israel, the Lord, our God, the Lord is One" (Deuty. 6:4). This would be a final affirmation of faith. At the moment of death, the mourners tear a garment. If the deceased is a parent, the tear is made on the left side, for the death of other relatives the tear is made on the right side of the garment.

Burial should take place within 24 hours after death. The body is washed, dressed in a simple white linen shroud, and placed in a plain wooden casket whether the person was wealthy or poor. This is to show that all people are equal before God in both life and death. Orthodox Jews do not allow autopsies unless absolutely necessary, as the body has the same sanctity in death that it had in life. Jews have to be buried in a separate, consecrated burial ground. The *tallit* (prayer shawl) of a deceased male will be buried with him. Cremation is generally forbidden,

Immediately following the funeral, a week of intense mourning, lasting seven days (***Shiva*****)** begins. Mourners are not permitted to leave the house, so members of the congregation, family and friends will come to the home where prayer sessions will be performed. A ***minyan*** must be present (i.e ten adult males), over and above other mourners, who say a special prayer, the ***kaddish***.

Mourners are not meant to be comfortable during this period. For this reason they are not permitted to do any normal activities. Mourners do not go to work, they sit on low stools, do not wear leather shoes. Relatives and friends will come to the home of the deceased to comfort the family and to provide meals. Relatives observe partial mourning for the rest of the month. If the deceased was a parent, partial mourning will be observed for a whole year. The anniversary of the death is called Y*ahrzheit.* This is very solemn occasion when mourners light a Yahrzheit candle for the deceased, which burns for a 24 hour period.

The mourner's kaddish represents a declaration of faith for the Jew. For Jews believe that no one is truly dead if there are those who remain to read their prayers and do their work. The kaddish binds all the generations of Israel together as a sacred act of the living for the dead. It is a prayer of hope that God's love will continue to grace the lives of the living who believe in him.

8. JEWISH MORALITY AND VALUES

Jews believe that the basis of morality is to be found in the Torah given by God to Moses and the people of Israel on Mt. Sinai. In Judaism, the Ten Commandments comprise the moral laws of Judaism, and it is believed that are as valid today as they were when they were first given. Although the Ten Commandments do not constitute the entire moral law (which actually comprises 613 commandments or *mitzvoth),* they are considered to be the foundation of morality. In fact, the Ten Commandments have become the "moral bedrock" (Halevy Donin, 1972, 239) of western civilization.

The Ten Commandments

- You will have no other gods before me
- You will not make for yourself an idol and worship it
- Do not use my name for evil purposes
- Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy
- Respect your father and your mother
- Do not commit murder
- Do not commit adultery
- Do not steal
- Do not accuse anyone falsely
- Do not desire another person's belongings.

For the Jew, the commandments reflect the will of God. Furthermore, human beings who obey the commandments are demonstrating God's activity in the world. In Jewish teaching, morality can never be a matter of simply keeping rules. People have to develop inwardly, and should perform good deeds, because they wish to serve God honestly and sincerely.

Fundamental to Jewish morality are the commandments to love God and to love one's neighbour. To live a moral lifestyle therefore includes respect for others especially one's parents, being fair and just, performing acts of loving-kindness, telling the truth, taking care of the poor, upholding family values.

9. SYMBOL

The star of David, or *Magen Dawid,* is the symbol used to identify the Jewish faith.

The menorah or seven-branched candlestick is an ancient Jewish symbol derived from the candlestick that originally stood in the Temple of Jerusalem built by Solomon in the 10th century BCE.

CHRISTIANITY

Christianity is a religion centered on the life, teachings, death and belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christianity can be regarded as a universal religion since it has followers in many parts of the world. Allegiance to Christianity generally spans national, ethnic, cultural and language boundaries, however any of these may influence the way in which Christianity is expressed or practiced. The spread of Christianity has occurred continuously since the founding of the religion in the first century C.E. Although the religion started in the Middle East, in Israel (Palestine) it has become a world religion. Worldwide there are approximately 2 billion Christians, or 33.3 percent of the world's population are Christian.

1. ORIGINS

Christianity really began after the death of Jesus. He lived in the first century CE in Palestine (now called Israel). The story of Jesus' life and earthly ministry has been reconstructed from four books in the New Testament referred to as 'The Gospels'. The Gospels were written about forty to fifty years after Jesus' death. It is not possible to reconstruct a single chronology of Jesus' life or to account for every detail of his life from the gospels, but the stories that have been preserved on Jesus' life are important to Christians as the foundations of their faith.

When Jesus was about 30 years old, he began to travel around Palestine preaching and healing the sick. The central theme of Jesus' teaching was the coming of the kingdom of God. Jesus taught that people could only be part of God's kingdom if they turned away from sinful tendencies and lived lives characterised by such virtues as humility, meekness and love. By means of his miracles and teaching mainly through parables, Jesus wanted to show people the way back to God. Like many other Jewish teachers Jesus gathered around himself a group of followers, known as his 'disciples'. Of the many disciples he chose twelve apostles who were committed to his ideals and acted as his spokesmen. They would go out on preaching and healing missions of their own. Jesus' life ended when he was tried by the Roman authorities, and crucified on a cross. Christians believe however, that Jesus was resurrected by the power of God and after forty days of post-resurrection appearances he ascended into heaven. The apostles continued Jesus' ministry after his ascension.

The early Christians believed that Jesus was the Messiah long awaited by the Jewish people. The Jews believed that the Messiah would bring deliverance to them and initiate an era of peace and joy. The Messiah would be heir to the priests, prophets and kings of old, but would surpass them all in greatness. The Greek word for Messiah is *Christos*, meaning *anointed one*. Since the earliest Christians were Jewish, they believed that Jesus fulfilled the roles of king, priest and prophet, that he was **the** Messiah, thus Jesus *Christ*.

2. MAIN BELIEFS

The history of Christianity is characterised more by divisions than by uniformity in belief and practice among Christian groups. The church is vast and culturally diverse, and there are many intricate and complex theologies. There are nevertheless some basic beliefs that the majority of Christians would agree upon. These basic beliefs have been summed up in ***creeds*****.**

2.1 Creeds

The church was borne in the first century CE after the Ascension of Jesus. Christians believe that after Jesus' resurrection (the belief that God raised him from the dead), the Holy Spirit descended on the twelve apostles to empower them to continue to spread the Gospel message. As the Church continued to evolve, believers found it necessary to articulate some of its beliefs more openly and systematically. A number of creeds, which were minimal statements of true belief, were composed for use in religious instruction before baptism, to define who Jesus was and his relationship to God. The creeds also helped the early church to defend itself against the challenge of various disagreements or dissenting views beginning to emerge amongst Christians. One of the earliest creeds was known as the Roman Creed, which contained Twelve Articles. The creed was developed by the Church of Rome in 140 CE and was finalized in its current form in 500 CE.

The Roman Creed:

"I believe in God the Father Almighty,
And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
Who was born of the Holy Ghost, of the Virgin Mary, was crucified under
Pontius Pilate, and was buried.
The third day he rose from the dead,
He ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of the Father;
From there he will come to judge the quick and the dead.
And in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Church, the forgiveness of sins, the
resurrection of the body."

The Apostle's Creed goes back to the 4th century CE and is based on the Roman Creed, but a number of additional phrases were added to it. This creed was also recited by adults who were about to be baptised:

The Apostle's Creed:

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of the Father;
From there he will come to judge the quick (living) and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of the saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting."
Amen.

Today, these creeds are often said as part of a church service. By repeating creeds, Christians confess their beliefs in the Trinity, the church, salvation and resurrection.

Some main beliefs, referred to in the above creeds, will be outlined in more detail below.

2.2 Deity or Beliefs about God

Christians believe in one God whose love and power can be seen in the world that God created. Christians have never really agreed on faith and practice. One of the beliefs that caused divisions in the church since the earliest times has been how to explain how Jesus is related to God. Even those Christians who posited a Trinitarian understanding of God, disputed the nature of the unity of three Persons in the Trinity. The search for the best way to understand Jesus in relation to God still goes on amongst Christian groups today. Many Christian denominations however, believe in God as a Trinity. The concept of the Triune God does not imply that Christians worship "three gods", but that the one God is to be found equally and identically in Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

God is the Father, the Creator of heaven and earth, God is Almighty and continues to care for and protect his creation. The most significant attributes of God lie in his omnipotence (all-powerful), his omniscience (all-knowing) and his omnipresence (everywhere). Human beings are believed to be created in the image of God, to rule and to look after the earth, and therefore have a special position in the creation.

Discussion idea for learners in Grades 10,11 & 12:

- **What do you think being *created in God's image* means for Christians?**
- **How could this belief be linked to showing Christian support for human rights? Give reasons and examples to support your answers.**

Hint: Find examples from South African history of Christians who refused to support the injustices of apartheid because of the belief that humans are created in the 'image of God' (Bishop Desmond Tutu; Rev. Beyers Naudé).

Find examples of Christian NGO's and other social organizations who work unstintingly to alleviate poverty and suffering because they uphold the belief that humans are created in the 'image of God'.

For Trinitarian Christians, Jesus is believed to be the Son of God, God Incarnate. In other words, that God existed as a human being in the person of Jesus, that Jesus was both God and human, that God spoke to the world in a unique way in the person of Jesus. God, the Holy Spirit means that God's presence is forever with his church. God continues to communicate with his people, to guide and to sustain his faithful followers through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

There are however, numerous Christian movements or denominations who do not agree with these ideas about Jesus and the Holy Spirit, yet they identify with the mission of Jesus on earth in some way and call themselves Christians. The diversity within Christianity is a fascinating study in its own right.

Discussion idea for learners in Grades 11 & 12

There are many different views within Christianity of the doctrines of the Trinity and the incarnation.

- **Provide some examples of groups of Christians who do not agree with the doctrine of the Trinity and the belief that Jesus was God-incarnate.**
- **Do you think that the term "Christian" should be applied to those groups of Christians only who do believe that Jesus was God incarnate? Give reasons for your answers.**
- **What do you think counts as "common ground" between all groups of Christians, regardless of their different beliefs ?**

[Note to educator: These kinds of topics are meant to generate dialogue and to draw attention to diversity within Christianity for learners of all backgrounds. The purpose of introducing these ideas is NOT meant to promote one 'Truth' over another. See Swidler's *Dialogue Decalogue* in the last section of this manual.

2.3 Sin and forgiveness

The teachings that would eventually become mainstream Christianity are based not only on the life and teachings of Jesus, but also on the ways that these teachings were interpreted by various apostles, teachers and church leaders. One of the foremost interpreters was the apostle Paul, who contributed greatly to what would eventually become the New Testament. His main contributions to Christianity were his teachings on self-sacrificing love. It was love, plus knowledge of God, that became the basis of Christianity as it was shaped by the Apostolic Fathers of the first centuries.

Christians believe that sins are kinds of crime – crime against God. Sin is therefore going against God's intentions for human beings. If Christians sin, they destroy their relationship with God. Human beings will always make mistakes however, but it is possible to repent (say that one is sorry) and to try again. Christians believe that the death of Jesus was a means of cancelling sin and reconciling God and human beings. God's forgiveness of the sins of human beings is brought about through the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross. An underlying theme in the New Testament is that God is merciful and will forgive someone who is truly repentant.

2.4 Belief in the hereafter or eternal life

Christians believe in eternal life, that death is not the end. Human beings therefore have a physical body as well as an immortal soul. Through Jesus' life, death and resurrection, God allows humans to find eternal reconciliation with himself. It is therefore important to live a life in total surrender to God's will, 'through fully surrendered faith in Jesus, in order to be washed of egotistical sinfulness, regenerated, made righteous, adopted by God, sanctified and glorified in the life to come' (Fisher, 1997:308).

3. DENOMINATIONS

The word 'denomination' means 'name'. A new denomination in the church was formed when a group called themselves by a new name to show that in some way they are different from other Christians. While denominations hold certain basic beliefs in common, they differ in leadership, interpretation of the scriptures, organisation, rituals and practice. The tendency to divide into denominations goes back to the earliest centuries in the church's existence. Historically there are three main branches of Christianity. These are:

- the Western Catholic Church (Roman Catholic mostly);
- the Eastern Orthodox Churches (such as the Greek Orthodox);
- the Protestant churches, such as Methodists, Presbyterians, Dutch Reformed and Baptists.

In South Africa, there are also hundreds of ***African Independent Churches*** **(AIC),** one of which is the Zionist Christian Church, which has its headquarters at Moriah near Polokwane in Limpopo Province***.*** Other than the ZCC, there is the International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC) and thousands of small urban Zionist and Apostolic type churches to be found all over South Africa. The history, beliefs and rituals of the AICs cannot be overlooked as an important development within Christianity and also in terms of giving expression to diversity as a concept in South African society.

The diagram on page 20 provides a summary of the major branches of Christianity. Some of the differences between denominations will be highlighted as they arise in the sections that follow.

4. SACRED FUNCTIONARIES

Different branches of the church are organised differently in relation to leaders. At the congregational level (parish level), the people responsible for leading church communities are known as priests, ministers or pastors, depending on the denomination. Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican denominations have priests, while Methodists and Presbyterians have ministers (meaning ***someone who serves*****)**. They usually go by the title *Reverend*. Baptists and Assemblies of God have pastors (meaning ***someone who cares***). They are also referred to as *Pastor***.**

Ministers, priests or pastors are usually the people responsible for preaching the sermon on Sundays or the Sabbath (Seventh Day Adventists). They are also responsible for teaching, comforting the needy and visiting the sick. In all denominations, the ministers, priests or pastors are also responsible for performing the different sacraments in the church, such as Holy Communion and baptisms. The priest or pastor will usually deliver a sermon based on the Bible, the sacred scriptures of Christianity. Higher up in the leadership of churches there may be bishops and archbishops who will be responsible for a large number of churches in a city or region (called a diocese).

In the Roman Catholic Church, the Pope (who is the Bishop of Rome) and believed to be the successor of St. Peter, is the supreme head of the Catholic Church on earth. The Pope is served and assisted by Cardinals in the Vatican and Archbishops and Bishops in different countries around the world where there are Catholics.

The most senior leaders in the Eastern Orthodox Churches are known as Patriarchs (‘great father). Each national church runs itself, but on important matters of belief the bishops of the churches will come together. Priests work in local parishes, while the bishops are in charge of a number of churches. Deacons assist priests and bishops in local churches.

Heads of the Anglican churches in different countries are known as archbishops and those leaders in charge of large numbers of churches, as with the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, are the bishops.

Generally, the Protestant churches are self-governing. Each minister or pastor is responsible for the running of his or her own church assisted by deacons and elders.

There is no central form of church governance amongst the AICs. Each of the small urban Zionist/Apostolic churches is self-governing. There is usually a hierarchy of leaders with the most common being a bishop and/or archbishop, a teacher (reads the Bible to the church members) and a Prophet. The Prophet is believed to be endowed with the gift of healing by the Holy Spirit.

The Zionist Christian Church is led by a Bishop (Barnabas Lekganyane) at the highest level. The Bishop is assisted my ministers in local churches. The International Pentecostal Holiness Church is led by Mr. Modise at the highest level and ministers in local churches. In every case the leaders and their ministers are male.

5. SACRED TEXTS

The Christian Bible consists of the Hebrew Bible (See Judaism), which is known as the *Old Testament,* plus the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. The best-loved writings of the New Testament are the ***Gospels***, which provide accounts of the life and teaching of Jesus. These books have been given the names of four of Jesus’ followers: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Different writers, who were prophets, priests, apostles and teachers, wrote the books contained in the Bible over a period of about 1400 years. For Christians the Bible is the Word of God. Christians may read it in their own time to gain inspiration, guidance or comfort from its words. In church services, the Bible has a special place in worship. In Protestant, Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches, there are readings from the Old and New Testaments in the services. The sermon that follows is usually based on the Bible reading.

In Orthodox churches the Bible is beautifully bound and escorted in a procession around the church accompanied by the Priest carrying candles.

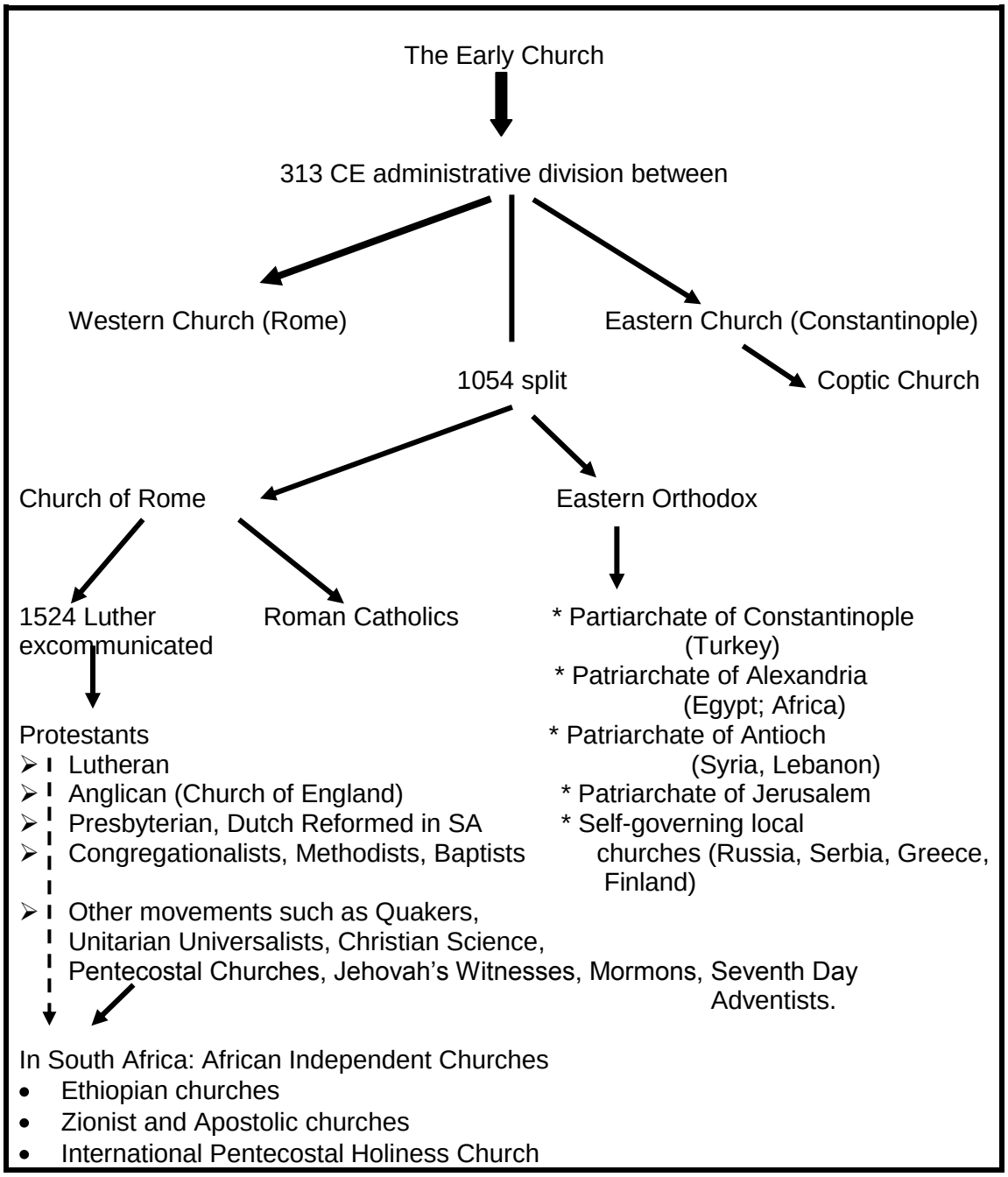
6. SACRED TIME

In this section we will explore those days and times that Christians set aside for prayer, worship and celebration. Celebrations are usually associated with festivals and rites of passage (life cycle rituals).

6.1 Worship

Christians usually worship on Sundays, since they believe that Sunday was the day of Jesus' resurrection. Others may worship on a Saturday, because they believe that the Sabbath should be kept in accordance with the Old Testament (Seventh Day Adventists). When Christians meet together for church services, they pray together, sing hymns of praise to God and participate in the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion.

The ritual of congregational worship is known as the **liturgy** in Roman Catholic, Anglican and Eastern Orthodox churches. The service normally follows a set pattern, often set out in a prayer book for the congregation to follow.



(Extracted and adapted from: Fisher MP. 1997. *Living Religions.* London: IB Tauris.)

Evangelical Christianity, as a development within Protestant Christianity, is increasing in popularity in the USA and in our own country. The charismatic experience is often associated with Evangelical Christianity, in which worshippers believe that they experience the physical presence of the Holy Spirit in their worship services. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, worshippers believe that they speak in tongues, are able to offer prophetic messages and heal by the laying on of hands and prayer. Worship is emotional, spontaneous and 'upbeat' as the 'praise and worship' services are led by members playing musical instruments in small bands.

Children may attend ***Sunday school*** in Protestant churches or ***catechism*** in Roman Catholic churches where they learn about the teachings of Jesus and how to live a Christian way of life.

6.2 Prayer

Prayer forms a very important aspect of the Christian faith. It may include elements of adoration, confession, and requests for intercession or thanksgiving. Prayers may be conducted individually or in congregations, guided by the priest or minister. The minister or a member of the congregation may compose their own prayers depending on the needs of the community. Often, the congregation will recite a set prayer, such as ***The Lord's Prayer*****,** together. Family prayers such as grace at meals are also an important aspect of Christian prayer. Prayer is regarded as a conversation between a person and God and should always be conducted sincerely and meaningfully.

6.3 Sacred practices (Sacraments)

In the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, the sacraments are religious ceremonies believed to have been instituted by Jesus or the Holy Apostles. There are seven sacraments and these are said to be the 'outward visible sign of the action of the Holy Spirit, giving inward spiritual grace' (Basic Christian Beliefs, 1991, Orthodox Church of the Virgin Mary). The word ***sacrament*** can be translated as "mystery". In Christianity, the sacraments are also said to be the sacred rites that transmit the mystery of Christ's presence to worshippers. They usually involve physical or visible elements that represent the spiritual or invisible. Of the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches, Protestant churches observe only two as sacraments, namely Baptism and Holy Communion (also known as the Eucharist). **(☮ CD)**

- **Baptism**

Baptism is not only a sacrament, but also a rite of passage by means of which a baby is welcomed into the church. Infant baptism is administered by sprinkling or pouring water over the infant's head while calling upon the Holy Trinity (i.e. In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit) in the Roman Catholic and some Protestant churches. In the Eastern Orthodox churches, the baby is baptised by three immersions and three elevations in water. When this rite is performed on infants, parents take vows to bring up the child in the Christian faith. The ceremony is also associated with the removal of original sin, particularly in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions.

Some denominations, such as the Baptists believe that baptism must be preceded by a confession of faith. When it is performed on adults, it involves immersing the person in water and is associated with dying to a sinful way of life and being raised to a new life in the power of the resurrection of Jesus.

Amongst the African Independent churches, the Zionist churches practice adult baptism as an initiatory rite and as a rite of purification. New members are baptized in rivers, dams or even the ocean if the churches are close to the coast. Established members believe that they need to be baptized for the purification of sins from time to time. Baptisms can be observed on the Durban beaches on Sunday mornings throughout the year. **(☮ CD)**

- **Confirmation**

In some of the churches, young members eventually have to make a decision for themselves about the meaning of their faith. When infants are baptized, their parents promise to ensure that they will grow up in the Christian faith, but at Confirmation the young people will "make firm" (confirm) their commitment to follow Christ. In other words, they take on the responsibility for their own faith. In the denominations that observe Confirmation, young people are confirmed at about sixteen. Confirmation is observed in the Roman Catholic and some Protestant traditions, such as the Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian churches. Children are confirmed at the same time as their baptism in the Orthodox Christian tradition.

- **Holy Communion**

This is the central sacrament in most forms of Christianity. It is called by different names in different churches: Mass, Holy Communion, the Eucharist, the Lord's Supper. Christians believe that Jesus instituted it in the Last Supper the night before his crucifixion. Bread and wine are the main elements of this sacrament which symbolise the body and blood of Jesus Christ. In the Roman Catholic tradition, the Eucharist is taken in a service referred to as *mass.* Catholics believe that the bread and wine are transformed into the actual body and blood of Christ. This is known as *transubstantiation.* Protestants believe that the bread and wine are symbols only which help believers remember the death and resurrection of Jesus. The sacrament of Holy Communion is in itself an act of worship.

- **Confession or penance**

Roman Catholics were traditionally encouraged to confess their sins privately to a priest before taking communion. This is known as the sacrament of penance or sometimes as confession. The purpose of penance is to bring the sinner back to God and the church. Orthodox Christians are also expected to spend time in contrition and fasting before receiving communion.

Protestant Christians believe that their sins can be confessed directly to God, without the intercession of a priest, therefore confession is not a sacrament in any of the Protestant churches.

- **Marriage**

Christian teaching places great value on marriage. A man and women are joined in a holy union that reflects the union of Christ with his followers. Christians believe that in their love for each other, married couples experience God's love. The Bible teaches that marriage should be a lifelong and intimate union. Christian marriages are usually conducted in a church by a priest, pastor or minister.

- **Ordination**

In the Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions, ordination is conducted whereby people are made deacons, priests or bishops. The sacrament includes the 'laying on of hands'. Divine grace descends on the ordained.

- **Holy Unction**

In the Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions, the priest will visit a sick or dying person to anoint him or her with holy oil. It is believed that divine grace heals both bodily and spiritual ills.

- **Death and Funeral Rites**

According to Christian belief, death is not the end, but the gateway to a life characterised by joy, peace and the end of suffering. The hereafter (heaven) is the ultimate goal of life on earth. According to biblical teaching, the resurrection of Jesus was a sign that he had overcome death. Many Christians believe that although the body dies, the soul will be reunited with God and find eternal peace.

Funeral services will differ from one denomination to another. Funerals are the means by which friends and relatives can express their sadness and show their respect and love for the person who has died. Normally there is no restriction between time of death and burial. In some denominations Holy Unction will have been conducted at the deathbed of the departed. The burial service normally takes place in a church or chapel, conducted by a priest or pastor. The dead will be placed in a coffin and either buried in a cemetery or cremated.

6.4 Festivals

Every year the Church celebrates a cycle of celebrations that remind the worshipper of the life of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Once again, differences exist between denominations as to the manner in which these festivals are celebrated, while some Christians do not celebrate them at all.

The following main festivals are celebrated by most Christian denominations:

- **Christmas**

This festival commemorates the birth of Jesus. The practice of celebrating Christmas on 25 December began early in the fourth century, but the date itself was significant long before the emergence of Christianity. It is a joyful festival associated with peace and goodwill. The ancient Roman celebration known as the *Sol Invictus,* during which people used to celebrate the return of the Unconquered Sun, was celebrated on this day. When Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, Christian meaning was given to this Roman festival. Christmas is associated with light, because Christians believe that Jesus is “the light of the world”. Candles will therefore be lit during church or carol singing services and is possibly the reason why light came to be associated with Christmas trees.

- **Easter**

Easter is regarded as the most important festival in the Christian calendar, because it commemorates the death and resurrection of Jesus. Not all Christians celebrate Easter in the same way, but most would regard what is known as *Good Friday* as a very special day since this was the day of the crucifixion of Jesus. The following Sunday is celebrated as the day of his resurrection.

For Roman Catholic and Anglican Christians a period of preparation begins six and a half weeks before Easter, known as **Lent**. Lent is associated with repentance, fasting

and sacrifice. Many Christians sacrifice something that they like for Lent in commemoration of Jesus' sacrifice of his life. Lent is also dedicated to asking forgiveness of one another. In the Western Church, Lent begins with Ash Wednesday when Christians have ash smudged on their foreheads by a priest. On the Sunday before Good Friday known as **Palm Sunday,** Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem before his crucifixion is honoured with the waving of palm or willow branches in churches.

Good Friday is actually a day of mourning during which Christians meditate on the crucifixion of Jesus. Between Good Friday and **Easter Sunday** many Christians hold an Easter vigil in their churches. They fast until midnight on the Saturday night, and in the early hours of Sunday morning, candles will be lit to symbolise Jesus' overcoming death and rising to new life.

- **Ascension**

On this day Christians commemorate the ascension of Jesus to heaven after the fulfilment of his earthly mission. This takes place 40 days after the Sunday of the resurrection. Although Ascension Day is no longer recognised as an official public holiday in South Africa, many Christians choose to observe this day as a holy day and attend church services.

- **Pentecost**

This follows ten days after the Ascension of Jesus to commemorate the day when the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus' followers (apostles).

7. SACRED SPACES

Christian worship typically takes place in church buildings, which may be revered as *sacred space.* There are many different styles of church buildings throughout the world. Often, the architectural styles associated with the culture of a particular country can be seen to have influenced the styles of church buildings. The way in which believers create their sacred spaces tells us quite a bit about the beliefs of the group and what is ritually important to them. Just by looking at the interior design of a church we would probably be able to work out the denomination's style of worship and also the beliefs held about the use of art forms in worship.

The features common to Roman Catholic, Anglican and many Protestant churches would be:

- an altar in the front of the church building representing the table of the Last Supper, on which the items for Holy Communion are set out;
- a pulpit from which the sermon is preached;
- a font in which baptisms are conducted (the size of the font will differ depending on whether the church conducts infant or adult baptisms);
- seats for the congregation;
- a choir stall.

Protestant churches are usually devoid of any imagery, except for symbols such as the cross which may be positioned on the wall behind the altar. In Dutch Reformed Churches, the pulpit is usually the focal point of the church indicating that hearing the message preached from the Bible, the Word of God, is central to a church service. The only symbolism one is likely to see is a cross and the Chai-Ro symbol, the first two

letters in Greek in the word, Christ, thus depicting that Christ is the Lord. Some churches have the most beautiful stained glass windows depicting scenes from the life of Jesus, from the story of creation or of the saints in Roman Catholic or Orthodox Churches.

One form of Christian worship that was introduced by the Franciscan monks and is still practiced in Roman Catholic churches today is following the 'Stations of the Cross'. There are fourteen pictures or paintings placed on the walls of the church depicting scenes from the last hours of Jesus' life as he carried the cross to a place called Golgotha, where he was crucified. This practice is usually performed at Easter time. As the worshipper focuses on each of the stations, he or she identifies in a very personal way with the suffering of Jesus.

Greek Orthodox churches are built according to a specific design with very ornate features, quite different from the austere designs of Protestant churches. The church is covered by a dome which expresses the eternity of God. The richly decorated ceiling on the interior of the dome represents heaven.

Orthodox churches are rich in symbolism, from the ritual furnishings to the iconography **(✇ CD)** all over the walls and ceilings. Icons are paintings of Jesus, Mary and the saints. Icons are sacred objects and help to create an atmosphere of reverence in Orthodox churches. The icons themselves are not worshipped, but are believed to help believers when they pray. Believers are encouraged to look for the reality that exists beyond the icons. The icons provide the worshipper with a point of contact with the saint or Jesus who is depicted in the icon. Popular icon images include the Madonna and Child and Christ as Lord.

Icons were probably originally intended to educate worshippers about biblical events or the activities of the saints.

8. CHRISTIAN VALUES AND WAY OF LIFE

Christians believe that they should live their lives according to the perfect example set by Jesus. The whole Bible however, directs the way of life of a Christian. This means that Christians, like Jewish people, value the ethics set down in the Ten Commandments (See Judaism and values), and the values advocated by the Prophets. The biblical prophets have been referred to as the 'conscience' of Israel, as they propagated justice, mercy, forgiveness and compassion.

Christians therefore attempt to safeguard:

- the sanctity of life;
- telling the truth;
- honour and respect due to parents and other older people;
- purity of thought and behaviour;
- social justice.

Jesus reiterated the Torah commandments to love God and to love one's neighbour. In fact, these two commandments are regarded as a summary of the Ten Commandments. Jesus was also opposed to violent and aggressive behaviour. Love and compassion should always be at the heart of a Christian's relationships with others.

The Golden Rule as taught by Jesus during what is known as the *Sermon on the Mount***:**

"Do to others, what you would have them do to you" [Matthew 7:12]

is an important principal by which Christians should live.

Discussion idea for Grades 10,11 & 12.

- Discuss whether or not you think the *Golden Rule* could be applied universally to promote the right to freedom of religion or belief.
- Find examples of Christian charity organisations which are motivated by the teachings of Jesus on love, compassion and kindness.

9. SYMBOL

The cross is a symbol of the crucifixion of Jesus. It represents the absolute love of God for humankind and the way for people to pass from death to life.

A crucifix is a cross with the figure of Jesus on it, mostly found in Roman Catholic churches. The crucifix is a symbol of the pain and suffering experienced by Jesus as he died for the sins of all humankind.

ISLAM

Islam is one of the great monotheistic religions of the world. For Muslims however, it is much more than a religion - it is a way of life. Islamic law, or Shariah, provides a total frame of reference for Muslims governing religion, education, culture, politics and social life. The words *Islam*, *Muslim* and *peace* all come from the same root Arabic word s-l-m, meaning "to surrender" or "to submit" or to be "unfettered/free". One who submits therefore to the will of Allah (God) is a *Muslim*. Peace (*salaam)* can only occur if humans "surrender" to Allah.

1. THE ORIGINS OF ISLAM
(✇ CD - Map)

Islam originated in Mecca around 610 CE. The Prophet Mohammed is central to Islam and is regarded as the 'seal of the Prophets', since it is believed that he confirmed the previous revelations of the prophets of Judaism and Christianity. Muslims believe that there will be no further prophets to succeed him.

Muhammad was born in Mecca or Makka around the year 570 CE, into a respected merchant family. Muhammad was orphaned at a young age and raised by his uncle, Abu Talib. He is said to have been a young man of unusual moral sensitivity and was troubled by the injustices that were characteristic of the Mecca of his day. Muhammad's moral sensitivity drove him to retire periodically to a cave near Mecca, where he spent many hours meditating.

At the time of Muhammad's revelations, the dominant religion of Arabia was a form of polytheism, with shrines of many gods and goddesses in many places. There was also belief in a high god or supreme god, Allah. In about 610 CE, Muhammad had the first of many spiritual experiences, in which he believed he was receiving messages from Allah via the angel Gabriel to convey to his fellow Meccans. These messages or revelations were later collected to form the sacred scriptures of Islam, the Qur'an. The revelations continued for a period of about 23 years and it was through these revelations that Muhammad received some of the fundamental teachings of Islam:

- That God (*Allah*) is One, and the only deity worthy of worship;
- That Allah was both merciful and all-powerful, and controlled the course of events;
- On the Day of Judgement, Allah would judge people according to their acts and assign them to heaven or hell.

In addition, Muhammad challenged various social injustices prevalent in the Mecca of his day. He strongly condemned the end of the tribal ethic in Mecca. The tribal ethic was known as *muruwah*, a code of loyalty and generosity shared with fellow tribe members. Therewith, Muhammad condemned the mistreatment and exploitation of the weak and unprotected. He called for an end to the practice of usury (interest charged on debt) that had made those who owed money to the wealthy even more indebted than they were. He spoke of the rights of the economically disadvantaged and the oppressed (including women, widows and orphans) and made the extraordinary claim that it was the duty of the rich and powerful to take care of them (Aslan, 2005). In this sense Muhammad can be viewed as having been a social reformer. In fact, he identified himself with the Hebrew prophets known to Judaism and Christianity who had spoken out against injustice and who had also met with opposition.

Muhammad and his follower's were rejected in Mecca, their hometown. They were persecuted in various ways by their opponents, making it impossible for Muhammad to continue his religious activity in Mecca. In 622, preceded by about seventy men and their families, Muhammad emigrated to Medinah, a town about 480 kilometers north of Mecca. Muhammad's flight to Medinah, or ***Hijrah*** (exodus or immigration) marks the start of the Islamic calendar. It was in Medinah that Islam took shape, where Muhammad became its' religious and political leader. It was in Medina that the main ritual forms of Islam were instituted, modelled on Muhammad's example. These were: prayer, almsgiving, fasting (for the month of Ramadan) and the pilgrimage to Mecca.

In 630 CE Muhammad marched on Mecca and after several encounters with the Meccan army, he took the city. He cleared the Ka'aba of all idolatrous images, forgave his enemies, and formally declared the start of the new era of the one God, Allah. Mecca became the spiritual home of Islam and would remain the holy city even though Muhammad chose to remain in Medinah.

In 632 CE, the last year of the Prophet's life, he made a final pilgrimage to the Ka'bah to demonstrate the rites that were to be followed from then on. Shortly afterwards he became ill and died in Medinah.

1. MAIN BELIEFS

There are specific basic beliefs that Muslims regard as being extremely important. These beliefs are captured in Five Articles of faith clearly stated in the Qur'an.

2.1 Belief in the Oneness of God (Allah)

The most important statement in Islam is the *Shahadah* – the Islamic declaration of faith:

"*There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet."*

In Muslim belief, Allah (Arabic for God) is the one and only, the eternal and absolute and there is no other like him.

Muslims believe that Allah is the creator of the world, giving life and providing sustenance to everything and everyone in the world. The doctrine of *Tawhid* stresses the indivisible nature of God, his oneness. So Allah is separate from creation, he has no partner, and the sin that regards anything as being equal or a partner to Allah is called *shirk*. This passage from the Qur'an points out something of the nature of God in Islam:

> 'In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
> Say: He is Allah, the One! Allah, the eternally besought of all!
> Whom all creatures need. He neither eats nor drinks.
> He begotteth not nor was begotten. And there is none comparable unto Him'.
>
> (Qur'an, surah 112).

Allah is revealed through the beauty of creation, through the prophets and the Qur'an. The Qur'an reveals 99 names for Allah, each one describing the nature or characteristics of Allah, such as The Merciful One, The Compassionate, The Faithful. This is not to say that Allah is limited to 99 names. Muslims use a *tasbeeh*, a string of beads to count their prayers. There are 99 beads on a *tasbeeh* corresponding to the 99 names of Allah.

2.2 Belief in angels

Belief in angels or angelic servants is fundamental to Islam. Angels act as the agents of Allah and serve him in many ways. The angels are often mentioned in the Qur'an. Muslims believe that the angels are created from light and that they are without gender. There are so many angels that only God knows their exact number. This article of faith is important, because it absolves the concept of *Tawhid* (doctrine of the oneness of God) from any probable impurities. Since the angels are obedient to Allah and are engaged in constant worship of him, they can never share in Allah's divinity or be worshipped themselves.

There are several categories of angels:

- Archangels such as Jibril, the angel of revelation. Jibril or Gabriel is the greatest of the angels, as it was Jibril who according to Muslim belief, transmitted the Qur'an to Muhammad. Another of the archangels is Israfil, who will blow the trumpet on Judgement Day.
- The angels who attend each individual continually and record good and bad deeds.

2.3 Belief in the Prophets

Messengers and prophets are important in Islam since it is they who transmit the will of Allah to the created world. Muslims are required to acknowledge that all the prophets in history (those in the Judaeo-Christian tradition) were God's messengers. There were 124 000 prophets mentioned in the *Hadith* collections and their task was to guide and instruct. The Qur'an refers to only 25 prophets by name and most appear in the Jewish-Christian scriptures, for example, Nuh (Noah), Ibrahim (Abraham), Isma'il (Ishmael), 'Isa (Jesus). In Islam, the Prophet Muhammad is God's final messenger. He was the greatest of all the prophets since Allah's revelations to the created world culminated in Muhammad.

Islam teaches that Allah communicated with his prophets through words that they would recognise as being God's words. The most frequent forms of communication would be through dreams and visions and by sending divine messengers, the angels. Thus Allah sends his angels with revealed books to the prophets, who in turn transmit the content of the books to the people.

2.4 Belief in the Holy Books (revealed books)

Muslims are required to affirm the revelatory and heavenly nature of all holy books. According to Muslim belief, several prophets received divine revelations written into 104 books, but only four of these have been preserved:

- the Torah (*Tawrat*) given to Moses;
- the Psalms (*Zabur*) given to David;
- the Gospels (*Injil*) given to Jesus, and
- the Qur'an given to Muhammad.

The various revealed books represented God's blueprint on how to live according to Divine Law. For Muslims, the Quran is the most sacred and is said to be the corrected version of the other books. Muhammad passed on the revelations he received from God to his followers, orally at first, and eventually these were committed to writing.

2.5. Belief in judgement and the life hereafter

The message in the revealed books warns Muslims of an impending Day of Resurrection and Judgement. Belief in life after death, resurrection and just reward is an integral part of the Islamic view of the present reality and the life hereafter. The Hereafter is desirable and necessary since this is further demonstration of the unerring justice and mercy of God. According to Islam, there has to be a future life in which virtue is rewarded and evil is punished. However, it is essential to live this life in total submission to the will of Allah to secure one's place in the heavens in the afterlife.

The period between the individual's death and the final judgement is known as *barzakh* and there are different beliefs about its nature. Some Muslims say that when a person dies they are visited by Izra'il, the angel of death who questions them about their faith. If they answer with the Shahadah, they are shown their place in heaven; if they answer wrongly they are beaten with clubs until the last day. Others believe that the soul hovers above the grave until the last day. Yet others believe that the soul sleeps so that it only seems like a moment between death and resurrection.

Islam teaches the resurrection of the dead rather than the immortality of the soul. This means that on the last day, or the day of judgement, the soul and body will be rejoined and come out of the grave. The present life will continue into what the Qur'an refers to as *Al-Aakhirah* or the Hereafter. The afterlife is very closely bound up with, and shaped by one's present life.

Al-Aakhirah begins with resurrection. When the trumpeter signals the end of time, all people, the living and the dead, will be raised and judged according to their works. All people will stand before God for judgement. Each person will be presented with the record of his or her life kept by the angels, so nobody will be able to deny the contents of this record. A person will be judged according to the preponderance of good and evil in him/her. The Qur'an speaks about setting up a just balance on the Day of Resurrection - good deeds will be measured against evil ones (Surah 21:47).

> *"And the measuring out on that day will be just. Then as for those whose measure of good deeds is heavy, they shall be successful. And as for those whose measure of good deeds is light, these it is that have made their souls suffer loss".*
> *(Sura 7:8-9)*

The fruits of submission to God, of living in harmony with his will, will result in satisfaction in this life and eternal happiness in the next. In fairness and justice, those who are

believers, but who remain inactive in this life will not be rewarded in the same way as those who showed their commitment through struggle and sacrifice.

3. WORSHIP

There are five essential religious duties or acts of worship, referred to as ***The Pillars of Islam,*** that Muslims believe help them to express religious devotion. For the Muslim, worship and the activities of every day life cannot be separated from one another. The Five Pillars are the way in which the Muslim preserves a balance between the 'outward' and the 'inward' and is reminded of the relationship between worship and the wholeness of human life.

3.1. Shahadah: Declaration of faith

The *Shahadah* is the formal expression of faith and involves the utterance of the *kalima:*

***There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet*.**

The first of the five pillars is the basis on which the others stand. It involves believing and professing the unity of God and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. Utterance of this statement before a witness is all that Islamic Law requires for membership into the Muslim community. However, the person who makes this solemn declaration also declares their desire to engage in the pursuit of righteousness by submitting to the will of Allah.

These are the first words breathed into a child's ear at birth and the last words which Muslims will utter at death. The words of the *shahadah* summon Muslims to worship all over the world and their meaning lies at the heart of prayer.

3.2. Salah (daily prayers)

Prayers or worship are prescribed five times daily. This pillar is second to the declaration of faith, because sincere worship at the allotted times is an indication of the Muslim's devotion and submission to God. Times for *Salah* are:

- shortly before sunrise;
- shortly after midday;
- mid – afternoon;
- shortly after sunset;
- an hour after sunset.

These times correspond to five periods of the day when people are usually engaged in various human activities, when people are at their busiest. *Salah* is a reminder that the various human activities cannot be more important than the Creator. Muslim's believe that performing *Salah* faithfully strengthens their belief in God's existence and goodness. A Muslim should demonstrate his or her belief by transferring it into every aspect of daily living.

The five prayers are preceded by ritual cleansing called *wudhu.* These ablutions include washing the face, mouth, nose, ears, hands and feet. The act of cleaning up before prayer is a way of showing that one has left the dirt of the outside world (physically and spiritually) at the door. One should come before God with purity of intention. Submission to Allah is expressed in units of prayer called *rakah.* Each rakah includes a sequence of

prostrations and prayers recited from the Qur'an. The bowing and prostrating, especially in congregation, indicates the body of believers in unison before the majesty of Allah.

3.3 Zakat (Charity)

Prayer is linked closely with almsgiving ***(Zakat)***, which is the third pillar of Islam. This third pillar is often described by modern Muslims as the pillar of social action (see section on the Origins of Islam and Muhammad). Externally *zakat* is the duty of sharing one's wealth with the poor and the needy. According to the Quran, it is the duty of Muslims to share their wealth as an expression of the belief that all possessions ultimately belong to Allah. At the end of the year, all Muslims who have the means must donate 2,5 % of their income or accumulated wealth to the *Zakat* fund which is distributed to the needy, the upkeep of mosques and to further education in Islam. This provision is designed to even out inequalities in society and to prevent personal greed. So it is the inward attitude of the Muslim who gives *zakat* that is important. Giving must always be done in a spirit of loving kindness.

The meaning of the word *'zakat'* is in fact 'to purify'. By giving Muslims are purified from greed and selfish attachment to their wealth. Giving unselfishly is a way of showing devotion to Allah and is therefore an act of worship.

3.4 Saum (Fasting)

It is the duty of Muslims to fast once a year during the month of Ramadan in commemoration of the first revelations of the Qur'an to Muhammad. During the month of Ramadan, Muslims abstain from eating, drinking, smoking and sexual intercourse between sunrise and sunset for the entire month. Inwardly the fast is thought of as disciplining the soul as one waits on Allah for spiritual strength and self-control. It is also about thanksgiving, since fasting helps one to identify with the plight of the poor and needy. Those people who can afford it are encouraged to be especially generous in their almsgiving during Ramadan. Special alms are given on the Festival of Eid-ul-Fitr, the festival that marks the end of fasting during the holy month of Ramadan.

Outwardly, the solidarity of Muslims around the world is expressed as they make this sacrifice together. In addition to fasting during Ramadan, Muslims will perform additional prayers and focus on reading the Qur'an. Many Muslims will read the entire Qur'an in the 29-30 day period that is Ramadan. Mosque attendance increases during Ramadan, especially in the last week which includes the Night of Power, when Muslims commemorate the descent of the Qur'an at the start of Muhammad's ministry.

Muslims use a lunar calendar of 354 days which means that the month of Ramadan moves backwards by 11 days each year. Ramadan falls in all seasons. In summer, the days are longer, making each day of the fast longer. In winter, the days are shorter, but the fast is just as difficult, especially when people need to eat to keep warm.

3.5 Hajj (Pilgrimage)

Pilgrimage to Mecca is to be undertaken at least once in a Muslim's lifetime, provided that the financial means are available. *Hajj* is associated with disentangling oneself from all worldly activities, possessions and relationships in order to purify oneself spiritually. Mecca is a holy place and when visiting it Muslims wear only white garments (***ihram***) to symbolise a state of spiritual cleansing and social equality.

Muslims visit the great mosque in Mecca. In the centre is a cube-shaped building known as the Ka'bah. Muslims believe that this was originally built by the prophet Ibrahim and

his son Isma'il and that this was the first centre for the worship of Allah. Muslims remember this by praying in the direction of Mecca every day when prayers are conducted.

Activities associated with the five days of Hajj are:

- Pilgrims walk around the Ka'bah seven times (tawaf);
- Pilgrims walk briskly or run between two hills, Al Safa and Al Marwah in commemoration of Hagar's frantic running in search of water for her son, Isma'il;
- Pilgrims stand together on the plain of Arafat and ask Allah's forgiveness;
- Pilgrims gather pebbles to throw at three stone pillars representing Satan;
- Pilgrims cut their hair and sacrifice an animal in memory of Ibrahim's sacrifice of a sheep instead of Isma'il (* See Eid Ul Adha).

4. SACRED TIME

(Salah, Fasting during Ramadan and Hajj also fit into this dimension).

4.1. Jumu'ah

Although Muslims are expected to fulfil the requirements for Salat everyday, special community prayers are said on Fridays in the mosque. All Muslims will leave their places of work or study as soon as they hear the *muezzin's* (the man who calls the faithful to prayer from the minaret) call in order to engage in *Jumu'ah* prayers. An imam, who is the religious leader in Islam, usually leads the prayers. Muslims assemble in rows, stand shoulder to shoulder and pray as a single body.

4.2.Festivals

- **Eid ul fitr** celebrates the end of the month of Ramadan. Special prayers are said in the morning for friends, relatives and neighbours. The end of the fast is celebrated with a special feast, gift-giving and visits to friends and relatives.

- **Eid ul Adha** takes place at the end of the Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca. It is associated with the sacrifice of a sheep or goat in commemoration of Ibrahim's vow to sacrifice everything to God. Although the sacrifice is conducted as part of the pilgrimage to Mecca, Muslims at home also make the sacrifice.

5.SACRED SPACE

The place of worship for Muslims is the mosque or ***masjid*** *(*an Arabic word which means *the place where one prostrates).* When people enter a mosque they must remove their shoes. This is a way of showing that the place is sacred, a place of prayer. Although mosques will reflect the architectural styles of the countries of origin, there are certain features that will be found in all mosques. [☮CD]

The ***minare*t** is a tower from which the ***muezzin*** calls people to prayer five times a day. The call to prayer is called the ***adhan***, the words of which are:

"God is Great (twice)
I testify that there is no deity but God (twice)
I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of God (twice)
Come to worship (twice)
Come to success (twice)
God is Great (twice)
There is no deity but God".

Inside the mosque one would find a place where Muslims perform their ablutions (***wudhu)*** before praying. Mosques throughout the world usually have some kind of facility with water for Muslims to be able to perform this ritual (☮CD). In mosques in South Africa, tiled areas with seats facing taps with hot and cold water and towels are part of the mosque architecture.

The main prayer hall is usually carpeted. There are markings on the carpet so that each person has his or her own space to conduct his or her prayers. Men and women do not worship together in a mosque. In some mosques, but not all, separate facilities are available for women. Women mostly worship in the privacy of their own homes, n a room set aside for prayers. In the mosque, Muslims stand shoulder to shoulder indicating that they are all equal as they stand before God (☮ CD). One wall of the mosque always faces Mecca, the direction of prayer. This is called the ***qibla***. There is a niche in this particular wall called the ***mihrab*** to show the direction of Mecca. Next to the mihrab is the ***minbar***, or pulpit, from which sermons are delivered, usually by the imam (☮ CD).

Mosques are devoid of any images, both on the inside and as part of the decorations on the outside, because Muslims are forbidden to make any images or idols of Allah. This is not to say that mosques are devoid of artistic features. Sometimes verses from the Qur'an will be written in calligraphy on the walls of a mosque. The calligraphy in itself is usually very beautiful and appealing. Various geometric designs in mosaic would be another artistic feature of mosques, sometimes around the minarets or around the entrances to mosques (☮ CD).

6. DAILY LIFE IN ISLAM

Daily life in Islam is governed by Islamic Law, known as *Shariah.* Shariah is not merely a legal system, but an all-embracing divine moral code providing the parameters within which Muslims are to conduct their lives. Shariah is viewed as the path revealed and ordained by Allah himself. The main sources of Shariah are the Qur'an and the S*unna* (example) of the Prophet as recorded in Hadith (sayings of the Prophet).

Guidelines regarding dress, dietary laws, the education of children, and various moral issues are provided for in Shariah law.

6.1 Dress

Islam places great emphasis on modesty. Both men and women are required to fulfil the guidelines regarding dress. These guidelines are referred to as ***hijab.*** Women should cover their heads with a veil (also called *burqa, chador*, or simply the headscarf) , their

arms to the wrists and their legs to the ankles. Clothing should not be transparent, nor cling to and reveal the shape of the body. Muslims stress that a woman can safeguard herself from sexual harassment by dressing modestly. Men are also expected to dress modestly. They are required to cover the area between the navel and the knees (‘awra). Men sometimes also wear a head covering, although this is not a requirement in Islamic law. Some men wear a turban, while others wear a *topee.* Modest dress should also be accompanied by modest behaviour.

The secularisation of modern society has resulted in prohibitions on wearing religious symbols in public spaces such as places of employment and schools. For this reason the wearing of the veil by Muslim women has become an area of controversy in some countries. As a result, Muslim women who choose to wear the veil or headscarf feel discriminated against on the grounds that it is often seen as a symbol of women’s inferior status in Islam. Opponents of the veil link it with backwardness and oppression and an infringement of a woman’s rights and freedoms. Some Muslim women believe that they are observing Islamic Law by wearing *hijab*, while others believe that wearing *hijab* does not make any difference to their devotion to Islam. These days, women who choose to wear the veil emphasise that it is their choice to do so and any prohibition on their wearing of the veil, must also be seen as infringing on their right to identify with their beliefs! In some Muslim countries where Shariah Law is used to govern society, wearing hijab is compulsory for both men and women.

6.2 Halaal and haraam

These terms are used to refer to that which is permitted and that which is prohibited in Islam, ranging from one’s behaviour in private and in public, to the food that one consumes. ***Halaal*** food would include meat that has been slaughtered in the ritually correct way. Pork and alcohol are ***haraam*** because the Qur’an prohibits the consumption of these. In fact, any foods or medicines containing alcohol would also be *haraam*.

Discussion ideas for learners in Grades 8-12:

- **In what ways do you think the Muslim laws governing appropriate dress could impact on Muslim children at public schools in South Africa?**
- **Do you think that halaal foods should be sold in tuck shops at public schools?**

6.3 ***Education***

It is every Muslim parent’s responsibility to ensure that his/her children receive instruction in the Qur’an. Many Muslim children attend Muslim day schools where religious instruction and secular studies are intermingled. Children who attend State schools, usually attend *Madrassah* classes in the afternoons. *Madrassah* is the name of the institution where Muslim children receive instruction in Islamic history, the contents of the Qur’an, Islamic jurisprudence and Arabic.

7. RITES OF PASSAGE

Rites of passage in Islam are important for family and community relations. The rituals associated with these events are significant as they serve to entrench certain Muslim values in the individuals and the community. The rituals associated with rites of passage in Islam, are not as obvious as in Judaism and Christianity.

7.1 Birth and naming of the child

The birth of a baby is a joyous occasion and a time to celebrate God's precious gift to the family. The words of the *adhan* (the Muslim call to prayer) should be recited into the child's right ear as soon after birth as possible. Then the words of the **Iqamah** are recited into the baby's left ear. Lastly, the Shahadah is recited.

Several days later there is ceremony held at the home of the child's parents. The baby's head is shaved as a symbol of purification and the naming of the child takes place. This event is marked by making a sacrifice, two sheep in the case of a boy, and one for a girl. The meat will be divided into three portions: one portion for the family, one for the guests and the third portion is given to the poor. In this way the family shares their happiness with others.

7.2 Marriage

Marriage is the cornerstone of the family and is strongly encouraged. The Qur'an refers to marriage as a ***decent companionship, authorised and supervised by Allah*** (30:21). Celibacy is not considered to be a virtue in itself, except in special cases such as the inability to support a wife and children. Islam considers marriage to be a very serious commitment and couples should therefore strive to make the marital bond permanent. Commitment to marriage provides a wholesome framework for sexual relations and for conceiving and rearing children.

The practice of dating is prohibited in Islam. It is not allowed for a man and woman who would be prohibited from marrying to be alone together or to have any physical contact. There should always be someone present who chaperones the two. Both parties must give their free and willing consent to be married. Forced marriages are not sanctioned by the Qur'an nor are so called 'honour killings' if a woman marries a man not approved of by her family. Parents may recommend a suitable marriage partner for their child, but no parent has the right to force a son or daughter into marriage with anyone.

In Islam, marriage, or ***nikah***, unlike in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christian traditions, is not a sacrament, but a social and legal contract. The Qur'an and Hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad) provide many guidelines and laws to the fact that marriage is sanctioned by Allah. Islam recognises that humans have needs and timely marriage allows one to avoid the sin of fornication or pre-marital sex.

Islam stresses that there are religious virtues and moral advantages to marrying and having a family. The family becomes the nurturing ground for obedience to Allah. The values of faith, love, compassion, mercy need to be nurtured in a Muslim home. The ideal Muslim home is one in which the basic necessities of food and clothing are met, where meals are eaten together and where there is hospitality and generosity.

7.3. Death and funeral rites

As a Muslim approaches death, he/she should attempt to recite the Shahadah. The body should be buried as soon after death as possible. Since Muslims believe in resurrection,

cremation is forbidden. The body is anointed with oils and wrapped in three pieces of white cloth. The body is placed in a simple coffin, or sometimes directly into the ground. This is to show that as in life, so in death, all are equal before Allah.

8. ISLAMIC VALUES

The following are important values stressed in Islamic teachings:

- discipline and self control
- purity, modesty and self respect
- dignity
- social equality
- sharing
- the sanctity of life.

Discussion ideas for learners in Grades 10-12.

- **Refer back to the section on appropriate Islamic dress for women– *hijab.***
- **Should Muslim girls be allowed to wear the headscarf as part of the school uniform?**
- **What values do you think Muslim men and women are exhibiting in wearing appropriate attire?**
- **Find out what the rights of a Muslim woman are in marriage.**

9. SYMBOL

The hilal, or crescent moon and star is used as a symbol of Islam. It has ancient connections with royalty, and among Muslim believers, it is a reminder of the lunar calendar, which orders their religious life.

One interpretation of this symbol has to do with the idea that Islam is like the moon and the stars, providing a guiding light for human beings out of the darkness of unbelief.

HINDUISM

The religious tradition called *Hinduism* is the product of 5000 years of development. The name, *Hindu* dates back to about 1200 CE when Muslim armies who were invading India wished to distinguish their own religion from the religion practiced by the people of India. *Hindu*, therefore is an adaptation of the Persian word for *Indian*.

The traditional Hindu name for what Western people call Hinduism is, *Sanatana Dharma* which means *Eternal Way.* Although Hinduism has no particular founder or prophet, spiritual teachers have played, and continue to play, an important role in guiding Hindus in their devotions and in passing on Hindu teachings.

1. MAIN TEACHINGS

1.1 Deity

Hindus believe that there is one Supreme Being or Divine Reality which they call ***Brahman***. Brahman is supreme, beyond all names and beyond all forms. Brahman is the Impersonal, Absolute World Soul that pervades the universe. Brahman is unlimited, the source and power of all life (omnipotent) and is all-knowing (omniscient). Brahman is also within everything. All living things have a tiny fragment of Brahman that they refer to as ***atman***. It is the goal of every Hindu to reunite his/her own atman with Brahman.

Hindus believe that the Divine has many faces or aspects so Brahman is worshipped in the form of countless gods and goddesses. According to Hindu tradition there are 33 million gods in India, but all of these are believed to be manifestations of the one Divine Reality. In this sense Hinduism is monotheistic. In fact, the dominant theme in some of the Hindu scriptures is that there is only one God.

> *There is only one God, who resides deep inside all objects and beings. He is everywhere and the inner self of all.' [Svetashvatara Upanishads 6:11]*

Hindus can however be monotheistic, polytheistic or monistic (the belief that all reality is actually one). Many Hindus believe however that Brahman should be understood in a threefold form (***trimurti***):

- Brahma, the creator;
- Vishnu, the preserver; and
- Shiva, the destroyer.

In Hindu philosophy, the universe is constantly moving through the pattern of birth, growth and death. These three deities represent different elements in the universe and work together to set nature in motion in terms of the cycle of birth, growth, destruction and rebirth. Brahma is seldom worshipped as a god in his own right. The three best-known traditions in Hinduism are:

- Vaishnivism: devotion to Vishnu; his consort is Lakshmi;
- Shaivism: devotion to Shiva; his devoted spouse is Parvati; and
- Shaktism: those who worship the Divine in the form of Shakti, the Mother (Uma) or Great Goddess (Devi).

The tendency in Hinduism is to personalise the divine as *Ishvara,* or Lord, making the abstract Brahman more accessible. For devotees of Vishnu, Shiva or Shakti, the particular Deity becomes the great all-encompassing Deity, the Supreme Lord, who creates, preserves and destroys. Each one could be the object of loving devotion for devotees. The male deities Vishnu and Shiva are usually worshipped in relation to female deities or consorts. This is because Hindus believe that both male and female powers are essential in creating and sustaining the universe. The female energizing power, ***Shakti*** (meaning power, strength, force) may be worshipped as the Divine Mother (Durga or Kali), or as a consort of a male god (Lakshmi, Saraswati and Parvati).

Apart from the principal deities, Hindus also worship the Divine Reality in the form of many gods and goddesses. These are often perceived as being the "children", or the faithful followers of the principal deities. Hindus believe that no one image is enough to represent God, because God's power is so great. Other popular deities worshipped by Hindus are Hanuman the monkey-god, Ganesha the elephant-headed god, Rama and Krishna (both incarnations of Vishnu).

Note, that the idea of 'destroyer' in Hinduism corresponds with the idea that all of life is steered towards death and decay. For out of death and decay, new life will be born. The belief in the presence of the male and female energies in the universe is well illustrated in Sanatanist temples, whereby the images or icons depict a male deity with his female consort (e.g. Vishnu and Lakshmi; Shiva and Parvati).

These three principal deities will be discussed in more detail at this point.

Vishnu

The great God Vishnu is also worshipped as Narayan, Perumal and Jagganath. Hindu art often depicts Vishnu seated on a huge serpent, floating on the surface of the cosmic waters (☮ CD). The waters are regarded as the source of all creation and emphasize Vishnu's role as Creator. Vishnu is protector of the worlds and the universe and assures their permanence. He is the guardian of *dharma* (see 1.2), and according to the scriptures he appears periodically to re-establish the good when the world is troubled by disorder. He then descends to earth to restore order and relieve humankind from the disorder. Vishnu has appeared for this purpose through numerous avatars or divine manifestations. Some details of these avatars have been set down in the table below.

Avatar	Myths
Matsya	• The incarnation in the form of a fish • The fish, Vishnu manifests itself to recover the Vedas from the bottom of the ocean, which an evil demon had stolen from Brahma.
Tortoise	
Wild boar	
The man-lion	
The dwarf	• Vishnu saves the world from the evil demon, Bali.
Rama with the axe	• The first of the 'human' avatars • Rama saves the world from the tyranny of the class of kshatriyas who have stolen the authority from the Brahmins, thus threatening to collapse society.
Rama or Ramachandra	• The central figure of the Ramayana He is the perfect example of kindness and the tireless hero who conquers demons. **(☮ CD)**
Krishna	• Means 'black' or the 'dark' one, because the colour of his skin is dark blue • He is seen as being the total manifestation of Vishnu, because he assumes the human condition completely. • Lord Krishna is the most popular of the avatars and there are many legends describing his activities. • His consort is Radha, a shepherdess whose great love for him becomes the symbol of the love between Krishna and his devotees. • His earthly existence ended as a result of a wound in his heel from the arrow of a hunter. • The avatar returned to heaven where he regained his divine form. Many Hindus worship Krishna as the supreme lord, and make Vishnu a secondary aspect of Krishna (*Hare Krishnas*)
The Buddha	
Kalki	• The avatar of the future • He will come to destroy the present age and bring in a new golden age.

Shiva

The great God Shiva is shown in many forms. He is the symbol of the force that both creates and destroys. He is sometimes depicted as dancing in a cremation ground, an indication that destruction is necessary for new creation. Shiva is however, also worshipped as a peaceful and protective deity who heals and restores. There is a very strong sense of Shiva's transcendence in Shaivism, but he is iconographically (in picture or symbolic form) represented in a number of forms in temples and shrines **(☮ CD).** The following are the most popular forms of Shiva:

- As the family man with his wife, the goddess Parvati and their two sons, Ganesha and Muruga, with the sacred bull Nandi; (☮ CD)

- As Shiva Nataraja, the Lord of the Dance. In this form he dances above the body of the demon he has killed, reconciling darkness and light, good and evil, creation and destruction. As Lord of the Dance, he dances out the creation and destruction of the universe; (☮ CD)
- As the Lord of Yoga meditating on Mount Kailasa in the Himalayas. He is shown covered in ashes, with the third eye with which he burns desire. In this form he symbolises ascetism (renunciation). He is clad only in a tiger skin with a snake around his neck. The latter symbolises his conquest of the ego; (☮ CD)
- As the giver of life, Shiva is represented by the lingam (a sacred pillar of fertility). The Shiva-lingam symbolises that God is infinite and all-powerful, the unmanifest, the energy that pervades all things. (☮ CD)

His consort is Parvati, Durga or Kali. Shiva's son is Subramanya or Muruga of whom there are often images in Shaivite temples. He is the patron of the Kavadi (fire walking) festival. Ganesha, the elephant-headed deity is also a son of Shiva and his image is to be found in many temples (☮ CD). Ganesha is worshipped as the remover of obstacles.

Goddess or Shakti worship

The feminine principle is worshipped in many forms and is regarded as the energizing force that empowers the more passive male. Goddess devotees regard her as the one who gives life, and as the guardian of Hindu religion and culture. These are the most well known forms in which the Goddess is worshipped:

Durga (☮ CD) is often represented as a beautiful woman with a gentle face. She has ten arms holding weapons with which she vanquishes the demons who threaten the dharma.

Kali (☮ CD) is the divine in its fierce form. She may be depicted dripping with blood and skulls symbolizing her as the destroyer of evil. The positive side of worship of Mother Kali consists of asking her for help in transforming oneself. What appears as destruction is actually a means of transformation. With her sword she cuts away all personal impediments to the realization of truth. She also opens her arms to those who love her. She is fearful to evil doers, but loving and compassionate as a mother to devotees.

As consorts of a male deity: Parvati is the consort of Shiva and **Lakshmi (☮ CD),** the consort of Vishnu. In this form Parvati is the devoted wife, and Lakshmi the goddess of good fortune and prosperity. **Sarasvati (☮ CD)**, is the consort of Brahma and is the goddess of learning and the arts.

Although Sanathanists identify themselves specifically as Shaivites, Vaishnivites or Shakti worshippers, they will honour other deities as well. Some Hindus choose not to confine themselves specifically to any one of these religious traditions and acknowledge many different deities in a hierarchy in the temples. We will return to this aspect of Sanatanist devotion when we examine the concept of ***sacred space*.**

1.2 Dharma

There is no one word in English to explain *dharma.* Dharma is an all-embracing term that is central to Hindu beliefs. It is the term used to refer to natural law, but it is also used to describe one's social and moral duties and the way in which Hindus practice their religion.

A Hindu's life is separated into four distinct stages known as ***ashramas,*** each with its own *dharma* (social, moral and ritual duties). These are:

- ***The student stage***: associated with study and learning;
- ***The householder stage:*** associated with marriage, raising a family and providing for the family;
- ***Retirement stage***: may begin with the birth of the first grandchild. This is the time to return to nurturing one's own spirituality;
- ***Renunciation:*** some people choose a path of complete renunciation of the material world. Many hours would be spent in meditation and study of the sacred scriptures in order to achieve transcendental realization faster.

Hindu teachings also divide society into four ***varnas*** or levels in society. These *varnas* are associated with particular occupational groups. According to Hindu teaching (Vedic), the orderly working of society meant a clear division of labour among four occupational groups. These occupational groups later became entrenched in Indian society as **castes.**

The levels are:

- ***Brahmins***: the priests and teachers at the highest level of the social system.
- ***Kshatriyas***: were the nobility in ancient India – rulers and warriors. Their general function was to guard and protect society.
- ***Vaishyas***: were merchants and farmers. They were responsible for looking after the economy.
- ***Shudras***: were the labourers, craftsmen and artisans.

Each stage of life (**ashrama)** and each section of society (**varna)** therefore has its own *dharma* or specific duties. Hindu teaching forbids someone to try to do the *dharma* of another person. For example, celibacy is expected from those in the student stage. Sexual activity is associated with the householder stage, with marriage and the procreation of children and would be taboo otherwise.

The four castes also represent four levels of spiritual growth. To rise from one caste to another, one has to increase one's knowledge and spirituality. In Indian society, it eventually became impossible to move from one caste to another and this meant that a person had to remain in the caste into which he or she was born for life. People from lower castes were prohibited from coming near people from the higher castes. The lowest of all were those people called the Untouchables. They were associated with jobs that made them unclean, such as cleaning excrement and the carcasses of animals. They were forbidden to enter the temples or from being too close to people from higher castes. Mahatma Ghandi worked very hard to integrate the Untouchables into the rest of society. As a result of his influence no Hindu could be refused entry into the temples. Many Hindus worked towards the abolition of the caste system.

1.3. Samsara

According to Hindu teaching, life is a continuous cycle of birth, death and rebirth, known as ***samsara***. The rebirth of the soul into another body or species is known as ***reincarnation.***

1.4.**Atman, karma, moksha**

Hindus believe that the soul **(atman)** will continue to reincarnate, helped along by their actions or deeds **(karma)** performed during their numerous life times. The process of reincarnation will eventually end when the soul is set free from *samsara* and joins with Brahman, the Divine Reality. The liberation of the soul from the wheel of rebirth is known as ***moksha***.

Karma in Hinduism is the law of cause and effect. This means that all actions reap corresponding results. Whatever deeds a person performs will influence the quality of life in future lives to come. Doing the duties associated with one's *dharma*, including moral deeds brings one closer to transcendent realization (God realization) and eventually to *moksha*. Not doing the duties associated with one's *dharma* as well as immoral actions will mean misfortune in the future and miserable rebirths in future lives.

2. SACRED WRITINGS

The scriptures are subdivided into the primary scripts i.e. Sruti (that which is heard) and the secondary scripts, i.e. Smrti (that which is remembered). The Sruti include the Vedas, the Brahmanas and the Upanishads. The Smrti include the Ramayana and the Mahabaratha.

The collection of writings known as ***The Vedas*** ("body of knowledge"), are the oldest of the Hindu sacred writings and are held in great reverence as revealed scriptures. The Vedas form the basis of all later scriptures. The Vedas contain mainly hymns or prayers to the deities.

The Brahmanas are a supplement to the Vedas and contain directions about the performances of the ritual sacrifices to the deities.

The Upanishads, the latest of the Vedas, consist of teachings from great Hindu teachers called *rishis*. The main subject of the Upanishads is the realization that God is one.

Historians believe that these sacred writings originated between 1500 and 1000 BCE, but they are probably older than their earliest written forms. The teachings would have originally been transmitted orally from teacher to student.

The Ramayana and the ***Mahabaratha*** are two epics or long stories very popular among Hindus. These epics emerged much later than the Vedas, the Ramayana was composed around 200-100 BCE and the Mahabaratha around 300 BCE. The Ramayana contains the story of Lord Rama and Sita, the story that is associated with the festival of Diwali. One of most read scriptures is the Bhagavad Gita, which is actually a portion of the Mahabaratha. These writings focus on the importance of faith and loving devotion towards God.

3. SACRED FUNCTIONARIES

A priest, or *brahmin* (see the castes or varnas) is one type of sacred person or religious leader in the Hindu community. The brahmins will give personal guidance, read the prayers in Hindu temples, and assist devotees as they offer their prayers and sacrifices to the deities. Brahmins are also responsible for the rituals associated with weddings.

Some Hindus focus on G*urus* or spiritual teachers to help them on their spiritual path. It is believed that God's grace flows to the disciple through the *Guru*.

4. SACRED TIME, SACRED SPACE

4.1 Worship at home

Hindus believe that traditions should be kept alive in the home as such Hindus will usually learn about their religious beliefs, rituals and traditions in the home. The shrine at home is therefore one aspect of sacred space. A shrine is a place of worship and most Hindus one in their homes where they offer prayers to their deities. Hindu acts of worship are known as ***puja***.

If you had to visit the home of a traditional Hindu family you are likely to see a shrine with pictures or paintings of those Hindu deities important to that particular family. There will probably be statues of the deities called ***murtis.*** Each *murt*i represents an aspect of God's power. The *murtis* help devotees to focus their attention on the deities. The other items that you would see would be a small oil lamp made out of brass, items to burn such as camphor and incense, a bell, pots of water and milk and coloured powders such as kumkum (tumeric powder), flowers and offerings of food such as fruit.

Puja in the home involves bowing before the images and chanting a prayer. The images will be bathed using the milk and water, but a mixture of yoghurt, honey ghee, sugar and milk could also be used. A small lamp is lit and held and moved around the image, accompanied by the chanting of prayers. Devotees make offerings of fresh fruit, flowers, rice and water by placing them in front of the images. Before meals the mother offers a portion of the food at the shrine with prayers of thanksgiving. The offering is returned to the meal and then it becomes **prashad**, or blessed food.

Lighting of the lamp is important, because the light is a symbol of God's presence and power. The offering of light is called **arthi**. It is a reminder that God enlightens the minds of all who turn to him. Everyone receives the power of light by passing the hands across the flame and over the face and hair.

Sometimes Hindus will go to a ***mandir*** or temple to make their offerings to God. The temple would be the other aspect of sacred space in Hindu tradition.

4.2 Worship (puja) in the temple

Puja in a temple may be assisted by a priest, but devotees may simply stop for a few moments to say a prayer to their favourite deities on their way to and from work or school.

Before a Hindu temple is built, the ground must be consecrated, or made sacred or holy. Prayers will be said to the Mother asking her to bless the ground. All Hindu temples are built according to a similar plan. Their front view faces the direction of the rising sun.

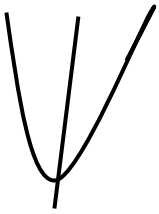
Inside the temple you are likely to see the images of the deity to whom the temple is dedicated. Hindus believe that the Supreme Being (Brahman) is so great that it is difficult to worship such a Being. The different deities are therefore representative of aspects of the Supreme Being. There are many stories about the deities, so the way they are shown in the pictures or *murtis* in the temples often has something to do with the stories about them.

It is important to note that not all Hindu temples are the same inside. There are many different strands or paths in Hinduism and this will be demonstrated in the main deities to whom the temple is dedicated. For example, there are Shiva temples, Vishnu temples, Radha-Krishna temples and Hare Krishna temples. Even though a temple may be a Vishnu temple, there will sometimes also be *murtis* of the other main deities, so Hindu devotees from many different traditions will be able to worship in the temple. This practice is an indication of Hindu tolerance towards the various traditions.

There are no seats in a temple. Devotees will remove their shoes before entering, bow to the deity as they enter and will sit on the floor to participate in the rituals. The priest wakens the gods with prayers and mantras. The murtis are then washed, dressed, "fed" and anointed with yellow tumeric, red kumkum and sandalwood paste. The priest arranges a tray, with offerings of water, food, rice, flowers, a fan, incense, a small bell and a conch shell. The lit arthi lamp is also placed on the tray. The ***arthi tray***, as this tray is called, contains five symbols for the four elements, fire, water, air, earth, and sound. The five senses are also represented in the items on the arthi tray as God is to be worshipped with all the senses.

Worship may begin with the singing of ***bhajans*** or hymns accompanied by musicians playing the harmonium and drums. The priest lifts up the arthi lamp before the images and then moves the light in a circle in front of them. The priest then faces the congregation and moves the lamp again. The light is taken around so that all the worshippers receive the light, and they ask God to purify and enlighten their minds. After worship, the worshippers will place a dot or stripes on their foreheads (*tilak)* to show that they have been to worship. The direction of the stripes is an indication of which of the deities has been worshipped.

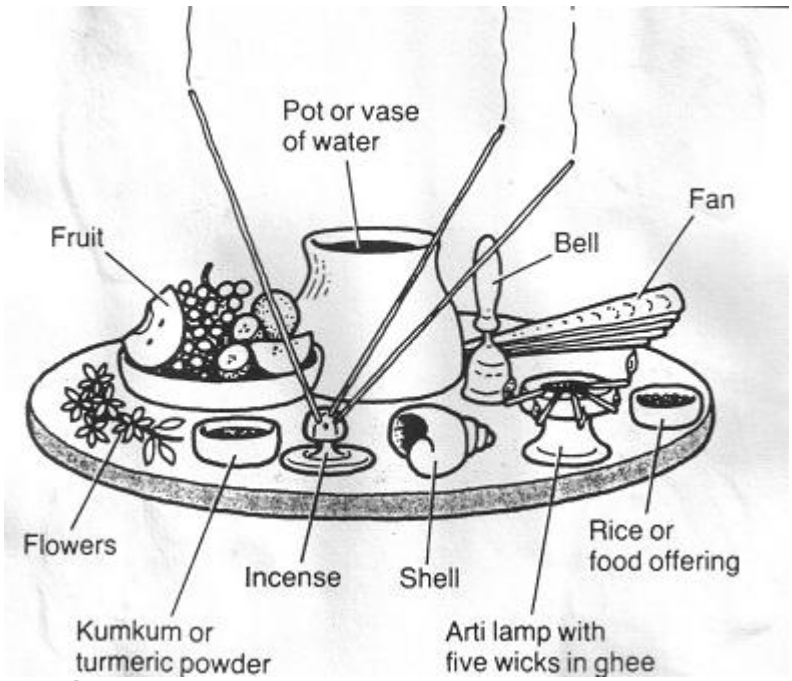
Vishnu



Shiva

On some occasions a ceremony known as ***havan*** is performed. Fire is a very ancient symbol representing the Divine. The fire is lit in a small container and small offerings such as rice or petals are sprinkled on the flames. The havan ceremony is an important part of a Hindu wedding.

At the end of a service, ***prashad*** is shared out amongst the devotees. Prashad is food that has been offered to the deities. It is a symbol of God's blessing to all who have come to offer their love and devotion.



The arti tray

4.3 Festivals

The various festivals in Hindu tradition would be another aspect of sacred time.
Hindus in South Africa generally observe a number of different religious festivals, however, the festivals observed will differ from one community to another. Some of the popular festivals are:

- ***Maha-Shivarathra:*** 'the great night of Shiva'. People fast and pray throughout the night in honour of Shiva.
- ***Holi:*** celebrates the coming of spring. There are many stories surrounding Holi, but they all tend to emphasise how good overcomes evil.
- ***Krishna Asthmee***: birthday of Krishna.
- ***Navarathri:*** the festival of nine nights – to honour the Mother Goddess Durga or Kali, Lakshmi and Saraswati.
- ***Diwali***: 'Festival of Lights". People place rows of lights on the pathways leading to their homes or in windows. The focus is on Rama and Sita and the celebration of how they overcame evil.

4.4 Rites of passage

There are many ways in which Hindu children learn about their beliefs, traditions and values. Other than through the many Hindu festivals, Hindus also participate in ceremonies and rituals that mark the stages in their growing up (rites of passage). Hindus refer to these as ***samskaras***. There are sixteen samskaras, twelve of them take place around early childhood. Here are some of the samskaras that most Hindus will perform:

- ***Name-giving:*** when a baby is twelve days old, the family will gather to name the child. The *brahmin* will be asked by the family to work out the child's name from an astrological chart. The name will usually have a special meaning and will be whispered into the baby's ear by the father or the priest.

- ***Mundan:*** is the hair-shaving ceremony. This takes place between the first and third year of the child's life. Hair-shaving symbolises the removal of impurities from previous lives.
- ***Upanayana***: is the sacred thread ceremony that marks the beginning of the student stage for boys who belong to the three highest castes. A priest places a thread of three strands over the boy's left shoulder and under his right arm. The boy promises to fulfil certain duties and responsibilities, including study of the scriptures and showing respect to his elders.
- ***Marriage:*** is important because it marks the entrance into the second stage of life. During the marriage ceremony, a couple will promise to be committed to each for life. The life long commitment in marriage is symbolised by the couple taking seven steps around the ***havan*** fire together.
- ***Death and funeral rites:*** death is seen by Hindus as natural so that the atman (soul) can continue its journey towards moksha. The body is prepared in a special way by family members and rituals are performed to bring peace to the departed soul. Most Hindus are cremated after death as it is believed that cremation allows for a swift release of the soul.

5. FOLLOWING A PATH TOWARDS LIBERATION (MOKSHA)

Hindus accept that there are many different paths to liberation (moksha) from the wheel of rebirth.

5.1 Path of knowledge

This path focuses upon finding the real soul through intense study of the sacred scriptures.

5.2 Path of love and devotion

This is the most popular path. Most Hindus follow this path which focuses on giving oneself totally to God in love. Offerings are made to the deities in shrines at home and in temples.

5.3 Path of good deeds

This involves doing good things for the good of others, not for self gain. Good karma can be increased by performing acts of loving kindness, such as caring for the needy.

5.4 The path of meditation

This path, includes meditation (mental focus) and yoga (bodily postures used to aid concentration). These practices help to order one's thoughts and emotions.

6. VALUES

Earlier on we explained the meaning of ***dharma*** in Hindu belief. We noted that *dharma* refers to one's moral, social and ritual duties. Hindu value systems would therefore be related to this concept. Traditionally, dharma will vary from person to person according to age, gender, social position, education and occupation. However, more generally speaking, dharma imposes three types of moral duty on individuals: to the world, to the family and to oneself.

Since Hindus believe that *Ishvara* (the Lord) dwells in all creatures, it is important to respect others. The five ***yamas*** (yama means 'control') are regarded as an important code of morality. One should refrain from actions associated with anger, lying, theft, lust and greed. Such negative qualities stand in the way of achieving God realization. One should work at being loving, self-disciplined, tolerant, peaceful and calm.

Hindus believe that it is important to have reverence for all life. The doctrine of ***ahimsa*** teaches non-violence. Mahatma Ghandi was a great believer in ahimsa and was well known for his non-violent means of protest.

'Non-violence is not a garment to be put on and off at will. Its seat is in the heart, and it must be an inseparable part of our being'. [Mahatma Ghandi]

7. HINDUISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

The South African Hindu community has the reputation of being the second largest outside of India/Sri Lanka – second to Malaysia. Most Hindus live in Kwa-Zulu Natal and Gauteng.

Hinduism first arrived in South Africa when indentured Indians were brought to Natal to work on the sugar estates (1860 –1911). These people were committed to upholding their traditions and continued with their customary worship, erecting small shrines and temples. After their indentures had expired, many Indians stayed taking up other occupations in various centres in Natal.

The languages spoken by Hindus who came to South Africa are reminiscent of the villages from which they came originally: Tamil, Hindi, Gujerati, Telugu.

Within the South African Hindu context furthermore, at least four main streams of tradition are to be found:

- ***Sanathanist Hinduism***: traditional, ritualistic Hinduism
- ***Arya Samaj***: central emphasis on one Supreme formless Deity. This form of Hinduism does not operate with any visible images of the Divine. The Aum symbol adorns Arya Samaj places of worship.
- ***Neo-Vedanta***: eg. Ramakrishna Centre; Divine Life Society. These groups stress the place of the guru in the life of the disciple. Spiritual life centres around the ashram (religious centre where devotees live and palce themselves under the instruction of a guru).
- ***Hare Krishna:*** International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Krishna is worshipped as Supreme Lord.

8. SYMBOL

The Om or Aum symbolizes the Divine Reality, the spiritual goal of all life. The Aum is also the most sacred sound, which is basic to all Hindu life and worship. This symbol will be found displayed in most Hindu places of worship.

BUDDHISM

Buddhism stretches back about 2 500 years. Today it is the dominant religion of Burma, Thailand, Tibet, Cambodia, Laos and Sri Lanka. Buddhism has made many inroads into the West and there is a growing Buddhist community right here in South Africa. Perhaps the main appeal of Buddhism in the West is that it teaches a system of human conduct based on rationality and relies very little on the supernatural. The historical Buddha is therefore not to be equated with or as a god, but is centred on the enlightenment experience of an historical figure, Siddhartha Gautama. Buddhism is in fact non-theistic. It is more concerned with wholesome, mindful living than speculation about the existence or non-existence of a Supreme Being.

1. THE ORIGINS OF BUDDHISM

The Buddha, whose name means *Enlightened One,* was the founder of Buddhism. He lived from ± 563 to 483 BCE. His original name was *Siddhartha Gautama.* The story of the Buddha's path to enlightenment must be told in order to understand some of the fundamentals of Buddhist teaching.

Siddhartha Gautama was the son of an aristocratic Hindu leader. His father did everything in his power to keep Siddhartha from painful experiences, so he built his son three palaces and brought him up in a sheltered world of security and luxury. Siddhartha married and his wife bore him a son. However, his life of luxury and domestic happiness was not enough for him. Despite his father's attempts to keep him from the world outside, he ventured out secretly one day to see the real world. During four visits to the nearby village, he would for the first time see the spectacle of human suffering.

After observing an old man, a sick man and a corpse, he became obsessed with the fact of suffering and with finding a way of ending it. On his fourth visit to the village he met an ascetic, a holy man who had given up everything to follow a religious way of life. The prince saw in the ascetic a calmness that suggested that he had somehow come to terms with the unpleasant fact of suffering. Siddhartha decided to follow the example of the ascetic. He renounced his life of luxury and for six years sought a solution living in the company of a variety of holy men. He learned all that they had to teach. In the process, he subjected his body to great hardship: to the heat of the sun and icy weather at night, by sleeping on beds of thorns and through starvation.

Siddhartha eventually realised that this rigorous path was not the path to enlightenment, so he continued his own pilgrimage in search of the truth. He seated himself under a bodhi tree one day in the lotus position and vowed that he would not move until he found the answer. After 49 days of meditation, Siddhartha passed into deep meditation and gained various kinds of new knowledge. Mostly he realised that in order to overcome suffering one had to overcome desires, attachment to existence and clinging to false views. He was thereafter known as the Buddha, the Awakened One, who had seen things as they really are.

He arose and made his way to the holy city of Benares where he delivered his first sermon on the meaning of life. For 45 years the Buddha travelled up and down northern India, preaching and attracting adherents to his way of life. What Siddartha learned during his long meditation under the bodhi tree formed the heart of his teachings. He had discovered the ***Middle Way*** between a life of extreme self-indulgence and a life of self-

mortification. It is the *Middle Way* that leads to insight, wisdom, calm and ultimately enlightenment.

2. THE DHAMMA: THE TEACHINGS OF THE BUDDHA

For Buddhism, the word ***Dhamma*** (Pali) (or dharma) means "teaching", more specifically, the teaching of the Buddha. The Dhamma is not considered to be any form of revelation from a supernatural being, but the result of the Buddha's enlightenment experience under the bodhi tree. It is only by following the Dhamma that one can develop the highest levels of wisdom and understanding. What is important however, is that each person is responsible for his or her own destiny. The Buddha taught that *wise men master themselves* (Dhammapada).

The *Four Noble Truths* and the *Eightfold Path* formed the basis of the Buddha's first sermon. All Buddhist teachings are contained within the *Four Noble Truths*.

2.1. The Four Noble Truths

The Noble Truths analyse the character of human experience. They embrace what the Buddha believed to be true about life. Rejection of these teachings, or failure to live by them is considered as ignorance or delusion.

- The first Truth diagnoses life as one of deep suffering, dissatisfaction or imperfection. The only way out of this dissatisfaction is to understand the root cause of it.
- The second Truth states that the cause of suffering is craving or desire. The Pali word means "clinging" or "grasping".
- The third Truth states that by eliminating the cause (craving) the effect (suffering) ceases.
- The fourth Truth describes the path or method that leads to the elimination of craving. This path consists of eight items and is called the Eightfold Path.

2.2. The Eightfold Path: the Path leading to the end of suffering (The middle Way).

- *Right view*: accepting the Buddha's teachings contained in the Four Noble Truths.
- *Right intentions*: acting upon the Buddha's teachings in everyday life.
- *Right speech*: avoid speech that is harmful, spreads gossip, or is harsh and angry.
- *Right conduct*: do not kill, steal, abstain from immoral behaviour.
- *Right livelihood*: adopting a career that allows one to live according to the Buddha's teachings.
- *Right effort*: striving with dedication to stay on the Eightfold Path.
- *Right mindfulness*: awareness of one's feelings, thoughts and conduct in the present moment; being aware of what is happening around one in order to help others; meditation helps one to be aware in this way.
- *Right concentration or meditation*: using meditational techniques to control the mind and the body (to overcome clinging or craving) in order to become calm, to develop loving-kindness, and to gain insight into the truths of life.

The Buddha's teaching hangs on three principles, known as the Three Marks of Existence: impermanence, non-substance or the belief that there is 'no separate self' and dissatisfaction.

2.3 Karma, samsara and nirvana

The Buddha taught that people are trapped in a cycle of birth, ageing, death and rebirth, or 're-becoming'. This cycle or wheel of rebirth is known as ***samsara*** (see Hinduism). The place of each person in the wheel of rebirth is governed by the law of ***karma.***

The word *karma* means action, and it also means the consequences of actions. The law of karma states therefore that for every intentional action there is a corresponding consequence. There are two types of karma –good karma produced as a result of good actions, and bad karma, which is the result of bad actions. Buddhism teaches that each one of us is responsible for our own actions, and therefore we are to blame for the consequences. Karma is not generated by every action, but only by those that relate to ethical or moral behaviour. This would include all intentional conduct, thought and speech.

Samsara is a state characterised by ignorance, that is, ignorance of the Four Noble Truths. The Buddha taught that five hindrances keep people bound to samsara, these are:

- sensuous lust;
- hatred and ill will;
- sloth and torpor (laziness);
- restlessness and worry;
- sceptical doubt.

Samsara could continue endlessly, life after life, until one is freed into a state called **nirvana**. Nirvana is the state of *enlightenment*, achieved when the fires of greed, hatred and ignorance have been extinguished. It is liberation from suffering or clinging and therefore from the wheel of rebirth. A person who has achieved nirvana may still carry on living, eating, having relationships with other people, but his or her actions would be done from selfless motives. At death, the enlightened person may not return and escapes into full nirvana.

2.4 Rebirth or rebecoming

When a person's physical body dies, the person's 'energy' flows into another physical life form, carrying with it the karmic imprint of previous lives. The law of karma controls the process of 're-becoming'. The Buddhist idea of re-becoming is different to the Hindu belief in reincarnation, that is, that everyone has a soul that moves on to inhabit another body after death. The Buddha taught that there is no 'fixed self', because people are constantly being reformed as a result of karma. This is why Buddhists prefer to describe this process as 're-becoming' rather than 'reincarnation'.

3. THE BUDDHIST WAY OF LIFE

3.1 The Sangha

If one is a Buddhist or becomes a Buddhist it is possible to practice either as a lay person, or as a monk or nun. The Buddhist community is known as the ***sangha*** and comprises both monks and lay followers. The monks and lay followers live together in a mutually compatible relationship.

The Monks**:** live simple, unattached lives. They shave their heads, wear robes (yellow, orange, brown, black or red depending on the school of Buddhism) and devote

themselves to study and teaching the Buddhist path to lay people. The Buddha accepted men and women for ordination, men are known as bikkhus, and women as bhikkunis.

***Lay followers*:** provided material support to the monks in the form of food, shelter, clothing and medicine in exchange for spiritual guidance. It is not necessary to live a life of renunciation in order to become enlightened.
Today, many lay followers become involved in the community through various social projects to improve the lives of those in need.

3.2 The Three Jewels

In order to become an active follower of the Buddhist path, a person would recite a special formula called the Three Jewels:

- I go for refuge to the Buddha
- I go for refuge to the Dhamma
- I go for refuge to the Sangha.

The monks believe that it is not their duty to enforce the Dhamma, but after hearing it, it is the duty of each individual whether to practice Buddhism or not. In addition to the Three Jewels, a person wanting to become a Buddhist would also recite the Five Precepts:

- I undertake to abstain from taking life;
- I undertake to abstain from taking what is not freely given;
- I undertake to abstain from the misuse of the senses;
- I undertake to abstain from wrong speech;
- I undertake to abstain from taking drugs and alcohol because these cloud the mind.

Discussion ideas for learners in Grades 10-12

- **Read through the Noble Eightfold Path carefully. Pay special attention to *Right conduct* and *Right livelihood.***

  What do you think these two aspects of the Eightfold mean for career choices for Buddhists?
- **Discuss what you think Buddhist attitudes must be towards war, the death penalty and consumerism after reading the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path and the Five Precepts.**
- **What do you think Buddhist attitudes must be towards wealth and the accumulation of possessions?**
- **Act out a recurring family argument you have with your parents. It could be about coming home late, or going out with someone your parents disapprove of.**
  What advice do you think a Buddhist might give the family to help put an end to the conflict?

4. SCHOOLS OF BUDDHISM

AFTER THE BUDDHA'S DEATH

During the Buddha's lifetime his teaching spread fairly rapidly throughout northern India. Shortly after his death, followers found it necessary to convene a gathering of the monks to consolidate the movement, since the Buddha did not appoint a central authority himself. The First Council was convened at a place called Rajagraha, where it was deemed necessary to consolidate and preserve the teachings of the Buddha. It was essential that those who had heard the teachings of the Buddha should attend. Five hundred bhikkus attended and the elder disciples recited the teachings as they had heard them. One of the bhikkus, Upali was able to recite the rules and regulations that the Buddha had laid down for the Sangha. Ananda, who had been the Buddha's close companion for a long time, was one who could recite the teachings accurately. Once the Council agreed on the accuracy of the remembered teachings, they recited them together, but the teachings were still not written down for hundreds of years. The two collections of teachings were passed down orally from monk to monk until eventually in the 1st century BCE these and a third section which had been added, were written down in the Pali language on palm leaves and stored in baskets. These three sections were known as the ***Tipitaka*** ('The Three Baskets') and comprise the Pali Canon, or scriptures.

A second council met about a hundred years later. An important difference arose between the more conservative and more liberal followers of the Buddhist path. There were those who restricted the attainment of liberation to monks and those who awarded a larger role to the laity. The differences led to the formation of two distinct schools of Buddhism. The two major streams that are evident even today, are known as:

- Theravada or "the way of the elders"; and
- Mahayana or "the great vehicle". Theravada is sometimes referred to as *Hinayana,* "the lesser vehicle", by Mahayanists.

Note: *yana* means vehicle, raft or vessel.

4.1 Theravada Buddhism

After the death of the Buddha, there were those monks who interpreted the Buddha's teaching to mean that anyone who seriously wanted enlightenment must become a monk. The best chance one has of reaching nirvana is through strict adherence to the monastic rules and through strict meditation. The most significant teachings, according to Theravadins, are that Buddha was only a man, that he was one of a succession of buddhas, and that enlightenment can be achieved through following his examples and teachings. Theravada Buddhism stresses that disciples will only achieve liberation through their own efforts. We will return to this point when we examine Mahayana Buddhism.

The ideal therefore in the Theravadin school is the a*rhat*, the Enlightened One, who is the personification of wisdom. Once the *arhat* is liberated, he or she will not return to this world. It is less likely that a lay person will achieve enlightenment, but it is possible to achieve merit for a better rebirth in the future by offering support to the monks. Anyone therefore who is serious about reaching enlightenment must become a monk. Other Buddhists refer to Theravadins as '*Hinayana* or 'the lesser vehicle' on the grounds that fewer people would reach enlightenment.

4.2 Mahayana Buddhism

Mahayana Buddhism provided greater scope for the enlightenment of lay people. This school claimed to be the "greater vehicle", because it would deliver more of humanity to the 'other shore' or Nirvana. Mahayanists made Buddhism more accessible to the broader streams of society, while Theravada taught that only the spiritual elite could attain enlightenment. Mahayanists claim to offer more possibilities for enlightenment than Theravada Buddhism. Some of the principals upon which the various schools of Mahayana have been built are as follows:

- that there exist, have existed and will exist in the future many other buddhas throughout the universe;
- that there are those buddhas who have been born as humans, have taught, have reached Nirvana, but cannot be contacted in any way (Gautama Buddha);
- that there are those Buddhas who did not take on human form, who also have not yet entered into full Nirvana, but have chosen to dwell in a heavenly realm where they can be reached and minister to people's needs. An example here would be the Amitabha Buddha who lives in a realm known as the Western Pure Land. Meditation on Amitabha may result in rebirth in the future, in the realm of bliss, known as Pure Land (the Buddhism taught at the Nan Hua Temple in Bronkhorstspruit ☮ CD);
- that all men and women are potentially buddhas, helped along towards Nirvana by beings known as ***bodhisattvas***. A bodhisattva is a person who has achieved enlightenment, but puts off nirvana to help others attain theirs. Boddhisattvas are seen to embody the ideal of limitless compassion towards the entire universe. They take a vow that they will take others to enlightenment with them. The bodhisattva ideal is the Mahayana answer to the Theravada ***arhat***. Bodhisattvas may be objects of devotion who live in other realms, but Mahayanists also believe that some lamas (monks) are reincarnated bodhisattvas. For example, The Dalai Lama is believed to be a reincarnated bodhisattva.

Zen Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism and Pure Land Buddhism are examples of Mahayana Buddhism. The Buddhist temple at Bronkhorstspruit is a Pure Land Buddhist temple, while the Buddhist retreat at Ixopo in Kwa-Zulu Natal is essentially a Theravada establishment (☮ CD).

5. SACRED WRITINGS

Theravada Buddhists believe that the council at Rajagraha (see above) resulted in the compilation of the Pali Canon, the ***Tipitaka*** or 'Three Baskets'. Theravada Buddhists believe that the Pali Canon is an accurate record of the teachings of Gautama Buddha. The three collections are as follows:

- ***The Vinaya Pitaka***

This collection contains all the rules of discipline for the monastic order. The Vinaya Pitaka stipulates that a monk is allowed just eight possessions – an alms bowl, a needle, a razor, a toothpick, a belt and three robes. The version written in Pali has five volumes, although Mahayana Buddhists have added one more.

- ***The Sutta Pitaka***

The word ***sutta*** means 'thread' and this collection contains the threads of the teachings of the Buddha. This is the most widely read section of the canon. The Sutta Pitaka contains the ***Dhammapada*****,** with its account of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. This section is highly valued by Buddhists, who learn much of it by heart so that they can recite it.

The Sutta Pitaka also contains the Jataka, a collection of 547 stories about previous lives of the Buddha. The stories illustrate moral points and emphasise the qualities a person needs if he or she is to progress towards enlightenment.

- ***The Abhidharma Pitaka or 'higher teachings'***

This part of the canon comprises various interpretations and explanations of the ***suttas***. These expositions are highly philosophical and very difficult to read.

Mahayana Buddhists have their own version of much of what is contained in the Pali Canon, but they have also added other works. Perhaps the most popular of the Mahayana Sutras is the ***Lotus Sutra***. This sutra teaches amongst other things, that all beings can achieve buddhahood, that lay and ordained people are equal and provides details of the boddhisattva path.

6. SACRED PLACES

As we have noted, there are many different types or schools of Buddhism. In all types, ceremonies are held regularly in temples. Temples are similar, but also somewhat different from one sangha to the next. The centre of Buddhist puja is the shrine. These are to be found in Mahayanist temples and homes in particular.

There is usually a statue or picture of the historical Buddha or some other Buddha, such as Maitreya, the future Buddha, in the middle of the shrine. Mahayana shrines are also likely to have a whole variety of Buddha or Boddhisattva images. The other items that one would find in a Buddhist shrine are:

- Flowers: symbols of impermanence and eternity. Although they shrivel and die, they leave behind seeds for regeneration.
- Water: a symbol of reverence and respect, and also purification.
- Candles: the flame is symbolic of enlightenment.
- Incense: the fragrance purifies the air. As the sweet-smelling smoke permeates the atmosphere, it symbolises the Dhamma being spread around the world.
- Food: usually a bowl with rice, which symbolises the earth.

The bowls of water in the shrine are filled every morning, and they are emptied at the end of the day. The above are all offerings to the Buddha, not as a god, but what he stands for.

Buddhist temples are rare in South Africa, but there are many magnificent ones in Southeast Asia. The only Buddhist temple in South Africa is the Nan Hua Temple in Bronkhorstspruit**(☮ CD)**. These temples house huge images of the Buddha and followers will visit the temples to pay homage to the Buddha. The main temple at Nan Hua was completed recently and three huge wooden Buddha statues have been installed.

The idea of 'worship' in Buddhism is a misnomer, since the acts of bowing, meditating, chanting and offerings to the Buddha images should be seen as ways of reflecting upon what the Buddha taught, rather than communication with the Buddha. The images of the Buddha serve as reminders to followers, to live according to his teachings.

7. SACRED PRACTICES

Other than the devotions described above, the following practices are conducted to aid Buddhists on the Path.

7.1 Meditation

Mindfulness or mental training is central to Buddhist practice. Buddhists believe that through meditation the mind is able to become calm and they are able to gain insight into the truths of life. There are different types of meditation, but mostly it involves sitting either in the lotus position, or with crossed legs, upright and alert. The eyes are half shut, and the hands folded into the lap*.* In some types of meditation, the meditator focuses on his or her own breathing. This is known as *Samatha meditation*.

Meditation is the means by which Buddhists gain control over the mind. Another type of meditation, known as *Vipassana meditation*, is associated with the eighth step in the Eightfold Path, an important step towards enlightenment.

Meditation is the most common ritual practice of Western Buddhists. Individual meditation is very much a part of living a Buddhist lifestyle, however, Buddhists also meet regularly at a venue to meditate as a group.

7.2 Chanting, mantras and mandalas

Many Buddhists make use of sounds and words as an aid to meditation. A phrase used in this way is called a ***mantra***. These are usually chanted over and over. The *Three Refuges* is one example of a formula chanted repeatedly, but sections of the Suttas will also be chanted in order to help Buddhists to realize the truth of these in their own lives.

Some Buddhists use visual aids to help them meditate. These are known as ***mandalas***, and they usually contain pictures of Buddhas and various other Buddhist symbols upon which the meditator will focus.

In order to keep count of mantras, Buddhists make use of ***malas***, which are like rosary beads.

8. FESTIVALS

Festivals or celebrations differ from one place to another. As noted above, meditation is the most significant ritual practice associated with Buddhism in the West. However, in Buddhist countries, including Thailand, Sri Lanka, Burma and China, the Buddha's birth, enlightenment, first teaching of the Dhamma and paranivana (death) will be commemorated in a variety of different ways.

8.1 Wesak

The birth, enlightenment and death of Gautama Buddha are commemorated all on the same day. This is because in some countries, Theravada Buddhists believe that these events all happened on the same date. This festival is called *Wesak* after the Sinhalese name for the month during which it is celebrated (the full moon of May-June). Temples are decorated and an atmosphere of celebration is created.

8.2 The festival of the Sacred Tooth in Kandy, Sri Lanka

This festival is associated with a relic of the Buddha, in this case the Sacred Tooth. The tooth is believed to have been the Buddha's tooth. It is taken from the temple where it is kept and it is carried by the largest of the elephants in a long procession of about one hundred other elephants. People line the streets shouting, blowing conch shells, banging cymbals and generally creating as much noise as they can.

8. VALUES IN BUDDHISM

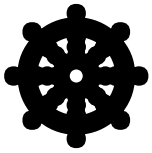
The moral values of Buddhism appear again and again in various parts of the scriptures. Although these are closely associated with Buddhist teaching, there are moral values, guidelines for living, to which we can all aspire. All Buddhist schools acknowledge that loving kindness, compassion and respect for oneself and for others would be the first stage of the Noble Eightfold Path.

We have already mentioned the Five Precepts to which a Buddhist lay follower must pledge himself or herself daily. Buddhists are expected not to:

1. harm other beings
2. take what is not given
3. misuse the senses
4. speak in a way that is harmful to others
5. take drugs or intoxicants which cloud the mind.

The Buddha also advised against making a living directly or indirectly by a trade or profession that brings harm to others. Five kinds of trade are to be avoided – trading in arms and weapons, human beings, meat and fish, intoxicating drinks and substances, and poison.

9. SYMBOL



The represents the wheel of life, and the Noble Eightfold Path.

AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS

1. INTRODUCTION.

The term *African Traditional Religions* (ATRs) refers to the collective beliefs and practices of the people of Africa. There are over one thousand different peoples or nations covering the vast geographic area of Africa. This provides great diversity in both religious belief and practice, yet a string of similarities run through many of these traditions. ATRs have existed for thousands of years, even before Christianity or Islam, and have been passed on from generation to generation. Traditional religions are also referred to as *Indigenous religions.* In fact, some people think that it is inappropriate to use the term 'religion' with reference to indigenous cultures, since there isn't really a word for 'religion' in indigenous languages. The way in which people view the world around them cannot be seen apart from the rhythm of their daily lives. The way in which indigenous people reflect on the great existential questions of both life and nature, of birth, growth, marriage and death, cannot be viewed separately from the unseen world, the world of spirits and a Supreme Being. It is for this reason that indigenous cultures are inextricably linked to what can be referred to as religion. African indigenous culture and religion were captured in stories, proverbs, music, dance, art and ritual. 'Tradition' means that one generation sets standards for the next generation and passes on what is of value in one generation to subsequent generations.

Indigenous religions have been severely affected by colonialism, on the grounds that the beliefs and practices were regarded as being *primitive* or *tribal*. As religions such as Christianity and Islam were introduced by colonizers aspects of indigenous culture and religion have been destroyed, rejected or abandoned. In recent times, many Africans have started to reclaim their traditional beliefs and the values embedded in them. In spite of the influences of global religions, there are beliefs that persist in the world views of many Africans and for this reason we cannot ignore these as an aspect of religious diversity.

Discussion ideas for learners in Grades 11 & 12

- **What is the meaning of the term "African"?**
- **Do you think the idea of being "African" is only reserved for Black people in South Africa?**
- **In what way are indigenous religions different from global religions such as Christianity, Islam or Buddhism?**

Although wide variations exist, most scholars of African indigenous religions have identified characteristics that all African indigenous religions hold in common.

2. GOD CONCEPT

Part of the tragic history of different religions competing against each other resulted in the earliest Christian missionaries misrepresenting African Traditional Religions in their assessments of the "religious landscape of the colony." The Methodist missionary, Samuel Broadbent who worked amongst the Tswana commented that,

> "The Barolong have a gross ignorance of spiritual subjects
> …. they have literally no God; and having no intercourse with the colony, they have no knowledge of God."

Robert Moffat from the London Missionary Society spoke of a "profound silence reigning over the subject of salvation and God. " Although beliefs about God vary, Africans have always believed in a superior being. In 1857 another of the missionaries commented more accurately that the people:

> "… of Natal and the Zulu-country have preserved the tradition of a Being whom they call the Great-Great and the First Appearer or Exister. He is presented as having made all things - men, cattle, water, fire, the mountains and whatever else is seen."

This superior being called ***Modimo*** in seTswana, ***Umvelinqangi*** in isiZulu and ***Uqamba*** in isiXhosa, is the source or cause of life, the Creator. ***Modimo*** is non-personal and holy. This makes ***Modimo*** unapproachable and beyond human understanding. As such, Modimo is not an object of prayer, worship or sacrifice. Yet Modimo is also immanent (the presence of the Supreme Being is in the world, not in some entity outside of it). This characteristic is captured in an African proverb that "God is always under the tree".

3. BELIEF IN INTERMEDIARIES: ANCESTORS AND SPIRITS.

A key African belief is that no radical gap exists between the spiritual realm and the realm of nature. Life is characterised by a cosmic oneness: No distinction can be made between the sacred and the secular, between natural and supernatural, for humans, nature and the unseen are inseparably involved in one another in a total community.

Interaction between the two components thus occurs. Two of these interactions are through ancestors and the sacred specialists of a community.

3.1. Ancestors

> "Just as life begins before the actual birth of an individual, so it fades gradually into obscurity. Older people in the kraal or village are already on their way to ancestorhood and are accorded due respect... Physical separation from the visible community is simply one more stage on the journey of life - a journey which starts with gradual admission into the community, leads through various stages of community participation, and ends with gradual departure to the spirit world."
>
> (S. Thorpe 1991)

At the heart of African religion lies the belief in ancestors, those who are released from the constraints of time and place to occupy a position between the living and the world of the spirits.

Ancestors are the living assembly surviving death to inhabit the afterlife. Interaction with other people in the community does not terminate at death. Even after death, the participation of the deceased is experienced in the community, home and clan circle. There is thus contact between the living and the dead. The ancestors have been called the “Living Dead” – ***badimo*** in seTswana and ***amadlozi*** in isiZulu. These ancestors are people. Therefore when speaking about an experience of contact with ancestors, person meets person, being meets being and an interaction which transcends the mechanical and chemical occurs. The interaction between the living and ancestors is one of service, of the same quality that one renders to one's parents when they are living.

Ancestors occupy an important role forming part of the extended community that is so vital in African society, regulating relationships in the family and the village. They are the guardians of the morality of the community, aiding and punishing where and when necessary. Their judgements are transmitted through the proper channels set for communicating with the spiritual realm in community life. The village will regularly gather to consult with the ancestors. If extra-ordinary experiences occur, the ancestors can be consulted through a diviner.

Ancestors thus supervise the lives of living descendants. They bestow blessings and curses. They protect the home by warning people if there is anything bad about to happen. Ancestors also mediate between human beings and the Supreme Being. As such, they convey human needs, requests, sacrifices and offerings to the Supreme Being and sometimes relay the Supreme Being’s messages to people. Prayers are seldom addressed directly to the Supreme Being, because he is too great to be approached except through the proper channels, namely the through the ancestors as mediators.

A primary way in which ancestors communicate with people is through dreams. This however is not their only means of making contact. Ancestors may manifest themselves in animals e.g. abnormal behaviour in antelope. Their presence in the community can come through the appearance of certain snakes, especially when these snakes shed their skins. Snakes are also sometimes regarded as portents that assure female fertility and help women in childbirth. Hearing the call of an owl late at night is understood as the ancestors giving warning of impending danger as too, is the sudden appearance of ants in the home and their equally sudden disappearance. Seeing a lizard in a place not normally inhabited by lizards is a warning of misfortune. A mouse eating clothes in the home is understood as a sign of misfortune. Ancestors also communicate through unusual events, such as during the birth of a child, through prosperity and fertility to both fields and people or through inflicting sickness on individuals, barrenness on women, or losing a job. Unexplained lightening strikes can also be attributed to the work of the ancestors.

3.2. Spirits

Other intermediaries are spirits. Both good and evil spirits exist. Spirits are more powerful than humans and thus have the potential to influence human life. Evil spirits cause misfortune while good spirits work to the advantage of humans. All spirits can be manipulated by the right sacred specialist. For many traditionalists, the safest thing to do is to keep away or protect oneself from spirits since they are unpredictable.

4. SACRED STORIES: MYTHS

Myths in all traditions exist in order to explain the striking and incomprehensible things about humans, life and nature. Myth is a mirror through which a peoples' consciousness about themselves surfaces. Myths disclose the inner recesses of people's souls and provide answers for communal behaviours and views about life. Myths therefore are the means by which the essential beliefs of a particular group of people are carried down to each successive generation.

There are a number of creation myths in African tradition, although many of these are no longer known to people. There was a Swazi myth that could share a common Nguni theme that relates how in the time of creation people emerged from a bed of reeds. The myth itself is no longer told, but the traditions have been preserved in two rituals that are still widely practised amongst the Swazi people. One of these rituals is associated with the birth of a child and the other is the Reed Dance performed at the Festival of the Reeds. This festival is usually held in spring (September). Traditionally the king chose a new wife during the festival, a tradition that continues to this day.

During the Festival of the Reeds, the female virgins perform a special dance ***ukushikila*** using reeds in this performance. While they are doing this dance, the king could choose someone to be his wife. After the king has chosen his wife, all the other girls became eligible for marriage. Here, as with the birth ritual, the continuation of the tribe is associated with reeds; it is from behind the reeds that life will come.

Another creation myth has been associated with the Tswana people. The myth goes something like this:

> "In the beginning, Modimo (God) had its abode in a hole underground the earth (Mosima). Mosima was a place of green fields covered with mist. It was characterised by people living in harmony and at ease. Animals such as cattle and goats grazed in the fields. Loowe, a one legged agent of divinity was the escort to those who came out of the hole, obviously by agreement or to fulfil the will and purposes of Modimo. They came out together: men with their wives, children and animals - cattle, sheep, goats and dogs. Loowe returned into the hole, leaving the people and the animals on the surface to inhabit it and to make a home in it."

Interestingly, among the Bahurutse who live in the area of Bakgatla, Botswana, there is a place called Ga Loowe. Within the rocks at this site, there are what is claimed to be footmarks of animals and humans found around a cave entrance. These footmarks are said to show that people and animals walked out of the hole. But there is another footprint which is only of one foot and is larger than a human footprint. It indicates that its owner returned into the hole. This same phenomenon occurs at two other known sites, one in the north-eastern Free State near Orangeville and the other in Zambia, south of Lusaka at the Kafue Gorge.

5. EXISTENCE OF EVIL.

African Traditionalists are acutely aware of the reality of evil. Because of the hostility of the African continent, many misfortunes are experienced by Africans. Sometimes disaster

is understood to be the result of God or the ancestors punishing people. But more often than not, disaster is understood as the result of witchcraft. Unlike in religions such as Christianity and Islam, where the source of evil is associated with the devil or satan, African religions tend to locate the source of evil in the human world, often blamed on the jealousies of people.

Witches (women) and sorcerers (usually men) are said to use external, hostile spirits which are more powerful than humans, to cause misfortune. As a result witches and sorcerers are highly feared. Ways have to be found to counteract the negative effects of witchcraft, such as paying a visit to a diviner who provides the antidote. People suspected of witchcraft may have been accused of causing the death of a person struck by an unexpected bolt of lightening or neighbours would say they had seen the person dancing naked in the moonlight. People accused of being witches are severely punished by communities.

6. SACRED SPECIALISTS

In African tradition there are usually two main kinds of religious specialis: herbalists or traditional healers and diviners.

- ***Herbalists or traditional healers***:

One doesn't choose to become a herbalist in African traditional contexts. A person usually receives a calling from his or her ancestors to become a herbalist. The function of the herbalist is to prescribe treatments which can protect people against evil, to heal sicknesses and bring general well-being to a person.

- ***Diviners:***

Diviners are also called by their ancestors into this service. They diagnose the cause of misfortune occurring in a person's life. Diviners are called ***izangoma*** in isiZulu, ***ngaka*** in Sotho-Tswana languages, ***amaqhira*** in isiXhosa. In some traditions, the roles of diviner and herbalist are combined. Diviners communicate with the ancestors and the entire spirit realm through divination, sometimes by throwing bones as in Zulu tradition. Whenever illness or misfortune trouble people, they may consult a diviner who consults with the ancestors to find out the reason for the misfortune.

The sacred specialists play a role in maintaining a harmonious relationship between the world of the living and the unseen world of the spirits.

Through a diviner, ancestors can be approached to request a favour from the Supreme Being, for fertility of the land and people, rain and general good fortune.

7. RITES OF PASSAGE

Life is the highest gift of God to individuals and the community. Thus an African is born, brought up, trained and led into maturity so as to attain and live a full life. To be fully human, the individual is required to participate in a series of rites of passage. Rites of passage are associated with the cycle of life and death and are closely related to the ancestors. The ancestors mould the child in the mother's womb and give life to the deceased. Initiation rites are those rites and ceremonies that acknowledge a young person's passage into adulthood. Attendance at initiation schools is seen to be an important part in the education of young people. Values are passed on to young people, as well as the norms and appropriate behaviour associated with being an adult. Unless a young person has been

initiated, he or she is not seen as being ready for marriage. Death leads to an afterlife, so the rituals performed during funerals are rebirth rituals. When the corpse is buried it is often put in the foetal position to symbolise the new birth into the realm of the ancestors.

7.1. Birth

When an African child is born, the occasion is celebrated with great joy. The naming of the child is an important occasion and is usually done in the presence of relatives and friends. Names are chosen with great care. The name of a child may reflect the feelings of the parents at the time of the birth, names may also relate to the state of the weather at the time of the birth or babies may be named after a respected ancestor. After a period of isolation of mother and child, the child must be introduced formally to the family/clan with certain rituals. The newborn baby is not accepted as being a person until it is shown to the ancestors and until he/she receives a name. In most South African societies, the baby remains in the father's clan so it is the father's ancestors to whom the child is introduced. An animal will be sacrificed in the kraal with all the family members gathered around. In Xhosa tradition the ritual is called *imbeleko*. After the sacrifice the animal's skin is tanned and kept for the child to sleep on.

7.2. Initiation.

The passage from childhood to adulthood is the second major point in the life of the individual and it is marked by rituals of initiation. Not all African peoples mark this period with ceremonies, but many do. Initiation is public recognition that the individual is passing from childhood to adulthood. It is symbolic of death to childhood and rebirth into the adult world. These initiation schools provide the education required for boys and girls to progress into adulthood. This is the time when the adults of the community rally around the young person to teach him or her about the changes happening in his or her own body and how to respond appropriately. The members of the community who oversee the initiations are selected from the community for their respectability, knowledge of the traditions and their wisdom. The values associated with adulthood are an important part of what is passed on from the elders to the young people in the initiation schools.

As long as a person has not gone through initiation, he or she will continue to be regarded as a child. This is because in the initiation school the young person learns what it means to be responsible at home and in the community. He/She learns how to make decisions in the family or clan, the history, traditions and beliefs of the family/clan. The initiates are also taught about marriage and how to raise a family. Initiation is therefore also the gateway to marriage and a young person would not be able to marry unless he/she has gone through initiation. In short, once initiated, the men are able to attend meetings of the clan, they can marry and take on important roles in the affairs and decision-making of the community or clan.

In Tswana tradition, initiation requires two separate, but co-ordinated ritual experiences, the ***bogwera*** for the boys and the ***bojale*** for girls. In Zulu and Swazi tradition there are no official initiation rites. Young people learn in the home and in the community context from their elders as they grow.

Discussion point for learners in Grades 10 and 11.
Find out which societies in South Africa have initiation schools and which do not.

During the period of initiation, the initiates, especially the males, are isolated from the rest of the community for a period of time. Temporary shelters are built for the initiates in the bush away from the comforts of home where they will stay for anything from a few weeks to about three months. Often the initiation schools are held during the winter. In other words, the young person must be subjected to some kind of ordeal. In some societies initiation is accompanied by a physical operation on the body. In Xhosa and Sotho-Tswana societies, the males undergo circumcision. In some parts of Africa, females undergo clitoridectomy (female circumcision) but it is more common in southern Africa for girls to receive a small cut to the inner thigh. In most southern African societies, girls are not sent too far away from the homestead. They join with other girls to learn about marriage, raising children and how to run a home. The time spent in the initiation schools is meant to strengthen the initiates for the hardships that adult life often presents. Young people learn endurance of pain and hardship as part of survival, but most importantly, they learn to be responsible leaders in the home and community.

These days, the rite of circumcision has received much criticism by outsiders, the reason being that circumcisions are performed using rusty or dirty instruments resulting in severe infections in the genitalia of the young men and sometimes even death. Newspaper reports have drawn attention to the kidnapping of boys by so-called community elders, who force them into the initiation schools and subject them to serious beatings. However, in spite of the negative publicity, traditionalists continue to value the place of initiation schools in the education of young people. Clan elders have started to work closely with health authorities in order to perform the circumcisions under more sterile conditions even in the bush. Some young men prefer to have the operation performed in a hospital, but going to a hospital is regarded as a soft option and does not replace the experience of hardship in the bush.

Many young people who have moved to urban areas have adopted western lifestyles and resist the initiation school experience as something which is outdated and irrelevant in modern times.
In some instances, boys and girls will return to their rural villages to experience the initiation school even though they live and go to school in towns or cities.

After the period of seclusion, the initiates return to the clan, but with a new status as an adult. The initiates are introduced to the rest of the village or clan through ritual sacrifice of an ox to the ancestors and with great feasting. In this way, they join with the past and the present and will contribute towards the future of the clan or family.

7.3. Marriage

The next phase of transition occurs when a young person gets married. This is the most responsible phase of his or her life. It must be noted that there are many different marriage customs in the different societies in southern Africa and it would be an

interesting exercise for learners to research some of these customs to share with the class.

7.4. Death

Dying is seen as going on a journey...home. The dead return to the place from which all humans come.

Upon death, certain rites are performed to permit the ancestors to gradually release living responsibilities and settle into the new role of ancestral status. A burial is followed by a customary period of mourning. The mourning period is terminated by a ritual performed by a male heir. This ritual marks the incorporation of the deceased into the ancestral world.

In the case of a death resulting from unnatural causes, the community has to find out whether the death was the work of evil spirits, bewitchment or the work of ancestors.

8. RITUAL SACRIFICE.

Humans communicate with the living dead in two primary ways: by direct verbal communication with the ancestors or by performing a religious sacrifice.

There is much preparation by a community before a sacrifice. The leader of the community would prepare the ceremony. Traditional beer is brewed and the sacrificial animal is selected. Upon slaughtering the beast, all the family ancestors are called upon to give guidance in the particular area. Beer and some of the blood from the sacrificed animal is poured into the ground for the ancestors. A piece of fat or select pieces from the slaughtered animal is placed by the ritual elder on the fire to be wholly consumed for the ancestors. A part of every sacrifice, usually the liver, is sent to the chief. The remainder of the animal is ritually distributed among those attending and eaten.

Sacrifices are performed to honour the dead, to thank them for benefits received and to plead for future favours and healing. Various occasions call for a sacrifice to occur. Before significant events (e.g. finding a new homestead, undertaking a long journey, getting married, before taking an exam, embarking on a business adventure or purchasing a car), the favour of the ancestors is sought. Sacrifice also occurs at a wedding or when a person is being called by the ancestors to become an inyanga. A sacrifice to the ancestors may also be necessary when seeking healing or advice from an inyanga.

9. VALUES

A strict moral code is observed in ATRs, both personal and social. Traditional communities have many taboos and prohibitions, which serve to keep healthy relationships among the group. In African society, it is believed that one's activities will shape, mould and direct other people's lives. So people are expected to engage in activities which promote the total well-being of the community. It is very important to avoid bad relationships with those amongst whom one lives. Total well-being within the community will also be promoted when various rites are performed. If anyone should fail to observe these rites, Africans believe that evil forces are released and will bring misfortune of one kind or another.

A sense of belonging is also central to the African world-view. Many stories passed down through the generations capture the communal nature of African society. This means that living is only possible in a network of relationships between one and one's community. In all life's pursuits, an African will always strive for healthy relationships with his or her extended family, clan or tribe, ancestors, God and nature.

A further expression of the sociable nature of African tradition is the tie to the family. The African extended family is well known, whereby every person is believed to be related to another. These relationships by blood, by marriage, or by mere association are emotionally seated and deeply cherished. This can be seen especially at important occasions such as births, marriages, burials and festivals.

Belonging is the root and essence of being – “I belong, therefore I am.”

Within these highly charged and dynamic communal inter-relationships, for better or worse, an African cannot avoid experiencing and being influenced by the activity of others as they shape, mould and channel their lives in certain directions. The essence of being is participation in which humans are always interlocked with one another.

An African is expected to engage in those activities which will enhance the total well being of the community of which he or she is a part, firstly by avoiding bad relationships with those among whom he or she lives so as to make self fulfilment of all those concerned possible; and secondly, engaging in various rites which maintain the well being of the community, because failure to comply with them will release evil forces which will bring misfortune of one kind or another.

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CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

DIALOGUE: A SKILL TO BE LEARNED IN LIFE ORIENTATION AND FOR LIFE ORIENTATION.

WHAT IS DIALOGUE?

- Means 'to talk', conversation or discussion between two or more people.
- Swidler: dialogue "means to talk …with those who think differently from us so *we* can learn…"
- Is a conversation on a common subject between two or more persons with differing views, the primary purpose of which is for each participant to learn from the other so that he or she can change and grow
- Dialogue *is not* debate. The ultimate goal is not to defeat the other, because we believe that we alone have the absolute truth.
- Inter-religious dialogue; inter-cultural dialogue; inter-ideological dialogue

WHY DIALOGUE?

- Our perceptions and descriptions of the world are true only in a limited sense - i.e. only as seen from my place in the world.
- If we wish to expand our grasp of reality, we need to learn from others what they know of reality and what they can perceive from their place in the world that I cannot see from mine (Swidler, 2004, 769).

DEEP-DIALOGUE

Means to:

1. Reach out in openness to the other in the search for truth and goodness
2. Be open to the other primarily so we can learn and find truth and goodness
3. Perceive that for us to learn, to find the good, the other must teach and open themselves and vice versa
4. Recognise that because dialogue is a two-way project, we then *both* learn - and share the good.
5. Learn that there are other ways of understanding, of embracing the world, than our own.
6. Learn to understand our commonalities and our differences - and value both
7. Learn to move between different worlds and integrate them in care
8. Learn the Deep-Dialogue thus gradually transforms our inner selves – and our shared lives.

Links Deep-Dialogue to Critical-Thinking which means to:

1. Raise our *un*-conscious *pre*-suppositions to the conscious level
2. Make a reasoned judgement ("critical" from Greek *krinein*, to judge) about them after analysis.
3. Recognise that our view of reality is *one* view, shaped by our experience
4. Become aware of multiple worldviews
5. Understand all statements/texts in *their con*-texts
6. Only then apply them to our contexts
7. See that each worldview is a new meaning network
8. Again, only then can we reasonably critique them
9. Understand and use very *precisely* each word and phrase so that our deliberations and decisions are informed with clarity and grounded in reality

(Swidler, 2004, 769-770).

<u>The relationship between Deep-Dialogue and Critical-Thinking means:</u>

1. Deep-Dialogue and Critical-Thinking are two sides of the one human reality
2. Deep-Dialogue entails at its root clear, reflective, critical thought
3. Critical-Thinking entails a dialogue within our own minds and lives – and hence at its root is dialogic
4. Deep-Dialogue and Critical-Thinking are thus two sides of the coin of humanity.
5. Deep-Dialogue/Critical-Thinking must eventually become a habit of mind and spirit, traditionally known as a virtue – a new basic mentality and consequent practice.

Swidler sees a relationship between Dialogue and religious freedom in practice

- Dialogue acknowledges religious freedom - religious freedom in practice
- Interreligious dialogue is conducted in the name of religious freedom and tolerance.

THE DIALOGUE DECALOGUE:
Ground rules for Interreligious, Inter-ideological dialogue

FIRST COMMANDMENT: *The primary purpose of dialogue is to learn, that is change and grow in the perception of understanding and reality and then to act accordingly.*

SECOND COMMANDMENT: *Must be a two-sided project within each religious or ideological community and between communities.*

THIRD COMMANDMENT: *Each participant must come to the dialogue with complete honesty and integrity*

FOURTH COMMANDMENT: *In I-R, I-D dialogue we must not compare our ideals with our partner's practice, but rather our ideals with our partner's ideals, our practice with our partner's practice.*

FIFTH COMMANDMENT: *Each partner must define her/himself. EG* Only the Jew can define what it means to be a Jew, the rest can only describe what it means from the outside.

Conversely, the one interpreted must be able to recognise him/herself in the interpretation.

SIXTH COMMANDMENT: *Each participant must come to the dialogue with no hard-and-fast assumption as to where the points of disagreements are.*

SEVENTH COMMANDMENT: *Dialogue can only take place between equals.* Both must come to learn from each other. Therefore, for example, if the Muslim views the Hindu as inferior, or the Hindu views the Muslim as inferior there can be no dialogue. Must come to learn from each other.

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT: *Dialogue can only take place on the basis of mutual trust.*

NINTH COMMANDMENT: *Persons entering into interreligous, interideological must be at least minimally self-critical of both their own religious ideological traditions.* A lack of self-criticism implies that one's own tradition already has all the correct answers – making dialogue impossible.

TENTH COMMANDMENT: *Each participant eventually must attempt to experience the partner's religion or ideology "from within".*

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